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# Calle Ocho revived : artists studios commemorate the role of Cuban exiles (1960-1973) in the development of Calle Ocho

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

*CALLE OCHO* REVIVED: ARTISTS STUDIOS COMMEMORATE  
THE ROLE OF CUBAN EXILES (1960-1973) IN  
THE DEVELOPMENT OF *CALLE OCHO*

A thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

by

Pilar L. Benitez

2001

To: Dean William McMinn  
School of Architecture

This thesis, written by Pilar L. Benitez, and entitled *Calle Ocho Revived: Artists Studios Commemorate The Role of Cuban Exiles (1960- 1973) in the Development of Calle Ocho*, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this thesis and recommend that it be approved.

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Date of Defense: April 9, 2001

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Interim Dean Samuel S. Shapiro  
Division of Graduate Studies

**DEDICATION**

**I dedicate this thesis to my parents.**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank my son Eric for his support and patience and my daughter Alexis for her kind encouraging words. I also like to express my gratitude to Juan Carlos Martin, Gerardo Martinez and Maria Teresa Rubio who providing me with the technical support required to complete this manuscript. I would also like to thank the members of my committee for their guidance.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

*CALLE OCHO* REVIVED: ARTISTS STUDIOS COMMEMORATE  
THE ROLE OF CUBAN EXILES (1960-1973) IN THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF *CALLE OCHO*

by

Pilar L. Benitez

Florida International University, 2001

Miami, Florida

Professor John Stuart, Major Professor

The purpose of this study was to learn about the historical development of Eight Street in order to use this information in the revitalization of this area with the new migration of artists.

The area of study concentrated on Eight Street from 13th to 17th Avenues. The historical origins that formed Eight Street were research at local archives and the history of each property was obtained through the City of Miami Property Appraiser's.

This study demonstrated a cyclical pattern prompted by the economical success of the immigrant group. The 1960 Cuban migration brought an era of life to Eight Street. As the Cubans became successful they left the area causing a decline. Presently the area is witnessing a migration of artists that may bring it new life.

The thesis retrofits buildings in this area to create a series of artist studios. These studios are designed using elements of 1960 Cuban urbanity, an era of robust urban life for this street.

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# INTRODUCTION

As a small child in the turbulent times of the 1960's, I was shielded and protected by my parents, I really never fully realized the great trauma they were experiencing as Cuban exiles. Today as a professional and a parent, I realize their courage and tenacity. My parents instilled in me high moral values, a great respect for education and a love for my Cuban roots. The topic of this thesis sets the context for their story.

Long before the 1959-1960 exodus, Miami and Cuba shared a close history dating back to their colonial beginnings. Their geographic proximity has been a major factor in their common past. This relationship was intensified, however, by the massive migration of Cubans to South Florida that began around the early 1960s, which marked the beginning of important changes that would eventually restructure the urban fabric of Miami. Fleeing the rise to power of Fidel Castro and his communist regime on January 1, 1959, Cubans immigrated in large numbers to the United States. The majority of the Cuban exiles settled in the City of Miami. The 1960 Cuban exiles brought with them their rich and colorful customs, traditions and culture to Miami. Cuban culture was not new to Florida, since the late 1800s, Cuban tobacco manufactures fled the island and settled in Key West and Tampa, however, the Cuban immigration of the 1960's was the largest.

The 1960s wave of immigrants joined a small community of Cubans that was already established in Riverside, an economically depressed area of Miami on 8<sup>th</sup> Street, directly west of the Flagler railroad tracks. By 1961, 8<sup>th</sup> Street in Riverside became known as *Calle Ocho* in "Little Havana." These new immigrants, largely composed of professionals and businessmen, occupied the existing buildings along 8<sup>th</sup> Street, redesigning them into a viable economic situation for themselves. The Cuban neighborhood adjacent to *Calle Ocho* created a market for their small shops. In an effort to remember the Cuba they left behind, the Cubans created memorials and public spaces. In a short span of 15 years, the Cubans had assimilated economically. Their influence extended beyond the storefronts and the memorials they created on *Calle Ocho* spreading into all of South Florida. In many ways, they created an economic boom.

The United States is a country of immigrants. The scenario that occurred on Eighth Street has been repeated a multitude of times with different immigrant groups throughout American history. Ethnic neighborhoods have assisted immigrants in achieving economic success. These streets have offered a comforting and familiar urban environment for newly arrived immigrants. In this urban context the language barrier disappears, ethnic groceries and foods could be found and it offers a place where immigrants could exchange ideas and discuss common problems. Immigrant streets like *Calle Ocho* have become and continue to be a major factor in the formation of great American cities like Miami, Los Angeles, New York and New Jersey.

## CHAPTER 1:

### CUBANS AND MIAMI:

#### SHARED PAST AND EARLY CUBANS IN MIAMI

Although the Cuban exodus in the 1960s was the largest to involve South Florida, it was by no means the first. Due to the turbulent politics of the Spanish Caribbean and its close geographical location to South Florida, this part of the United States has traditionally been a refuge for Cubans fleeing political repression.<sup>1</sup>

Europeans printed the first map of the new world in 1507; on this map they recognized two prominent landmasses: Florida and Cuba. Long before Miami became a city in 1896, Florida and Cuba shared centuries of common history.<sup>2</sup> Beginning with Cuba's bloody Ten Year War of 1860, many Cubans came to Florida's shores and began making their homes there. Charles A. Gauld, staff writer for the Miami News, wrote in his 1971 article that, "Cuba's bloody first war of independence drives hundreds of Cubans to Key West where the sponge fishing and cigar factories make it Florida's top city for many years."<sup>3</sup> By 1873, Cubans made up the majority of the population of Key West.<sup>4</sup>

In 1886, Vincent Martinez Ybor, cigar factory owner, lead hundreds of cigar makers from Key West to Tampa. Ybor wanted to develop a company town and decided to invest in Tampa because tobacco labor unions in Key West were becoming very restrictive. Also Henry Plat's new railroad extension and Tampa's port made the location feasible for export. In 1885, he purchased 40 acres from the Tampa Board of Trade and began constructing his city. Four thousand skilled Cuban tobacco rollers serviced the cigar factory. By 1900, the Ybor Cigar Factory was the largest in the world. The Florida Department of Natural Resources describes the urban

life in the 1900s Cuban community, "Seventh Avenue, called "La Septima," was the center of community life. Shop owners lived above their stores, relaxed on their balconies and socialized in their clubs, casinos and speakeasies. Spanish was spoken in the factories and many homes."<sup>5</sup> The description of the way of life in "La Septima" dates to the early 1900s, however, it is very similar to the activities along *Calle Ocho* in the 1960's and 1970's. On Tampa's "La Septima" as in Miami's *Calle Ocho* small local newspapers and ethnic commercial establishments were developed that catered to the adjacent Cuban community. By the mid-1900s, twenty percent of Tampa's population was of Cuban ancestry.<sup>6</sup>

Between 1891 and 1894, the leader of Cuba's fight for independence from Spain, Jose Marti, visited Cuban communities located in Miami, Tampa and Key West for the purpose of soliciting funds to support the Cuban Revolutionary Army. The Cuban settlements in Florida were key supporters of the Cuban cause.<sup>7</sup> According to Francis J. Sicius, a humanities professor at Saint Thomas University, Jose Marti was overwhelmed by the support he received from the Cubans living in Tampa. While in Tampa, Jose Marti wrote "Tampa Resolutions," which would become the basic doctrine of the Cuban Revolutionary Party.<sup>8</sup> Arva Moore Parks, official historian for the State of Florida, notes that Tampa, in 1898, became a major military base and headquarters for Teddy Roosevelt's legendary "Rough Riders" in Cuba's war against Spain. Miami participated in this war as the final step in the ongoing operations of smuggling arms from the United States to Cuba and as a host for military camps.<sup>9</sup>

Miami served as an important link in the New York/Cuba ammunition smuggling operation for Cuba's War of Independence of 1895. Two coastal running ships, Dynamite Johnny O'Brien and Napoleon Bonaparte Broward, transported the ammunition from Miami to Key West and then finally to Cuba. This illegal business operation with Cuba was very profitable; and soon all the dynamite produced in the phosphorous plants around Bartow, Florida was being shipped to the Cuban revolutionaries.<sup>10</sup>

In the late 1800s, Spain was considered the enemy of both America and Cuba. The Spanish-American War was being fought in New Mexico and Texas and the Cuban War of Independence further created feelings of animosity toward the Spaniards. Theodore Roosevelt, a young politician at this time echoed the American

sentiment, when he stated, "It is America's duty to intervene in Cuba and take the opportunity to drive the Spaniard from the Western World."<sup>11</sup> By the end of the Cuban War of Independence in the early 1900s, the United States had invested heavily in Cuba, and the two countries were brought even closer together.<sup>12</sup>

In 1912, the coasts of Florida and Cuba came closer together with Flagler's Overseas Railroad extension to Key West. An advertisement from the early 1900s (figure 1), features travel packages between Key West and Cuba. Flagler's Pullman Cars carried passengers to Key West and ships then carried them to Cuba.<sup>13</sup>



Figure 1. 1912 Overseas Railroad

Extension travel package to Cuba.



Figure 2. 1930 Postcard

advertisement of Bacardi Rum.

President Gerardo Machado took office in 1925. Both Cuba and the United States welcomed Machado's supposedly democratic government. President Machado encouraged and guaranteed American investments on the island.<sup>14</sup> According to Francis J. Sicius, in 1930 President Machado launched a great promotion of Cuba in Miami in the form of a weekly report of Cuba in the Miami Herald. The reports did not contain information about business opportunities and tourism.<sup>15</sup> A 1930's advertisement by Cuba's Bacardi Rum Company (figure 2) is indicative of Cuba's close trade with South Florida. In the poster, Uncle Sam is being flown from Cuba to Miami by a bat, which is the logo of Bacardi Rum. This is particularly poignant, since this advertisement was produced during the age of Prohibition in the United States. Illegal Bacardi Rum was smuggled into Florida by way of the canals of Coral Gables.<sup>16</sup>

The transportation age brought Cuba and Miami together, making resettlement of Cubans to Miami even easier. On January 16, 1928, Pan American Airways inaugurated regular flights between Havana and Key West. Members of the Pan Am flight and ground crew are photographed (figure 3) with "General Machado," one of the first aircrafts used in these flights. A photograph taken on January 16, 1928 (figure 4), shows the passengers of the first flight from Key West to

Havana. Also, a daily ferry sailed on an hourly basis between the coasts of Key West and Havana.<sup>17</sup> The airplane facilitated travel to and from South Florida and Cuba. This activity increased the commerce and trade between the two nations.

Since the time of Cuba's War of Independence, and with each successive overthrow of Cuba's governments, Miami's Cuban population has grown, into small pockets of Cuban communities across the United States and in Miami. During the 1920s, Cuban settlements were established in three areas of South Florida, located in Miami Beach, in the Northwest section of South Miami Avenue, and in Riverside. The settlements were largely made up of political exiles of the numerous deposed regimes of the island. The wealthiest political dissidents of these various revolutions usually settled in Miami Beach, in the mist of its highly developed retail culture.

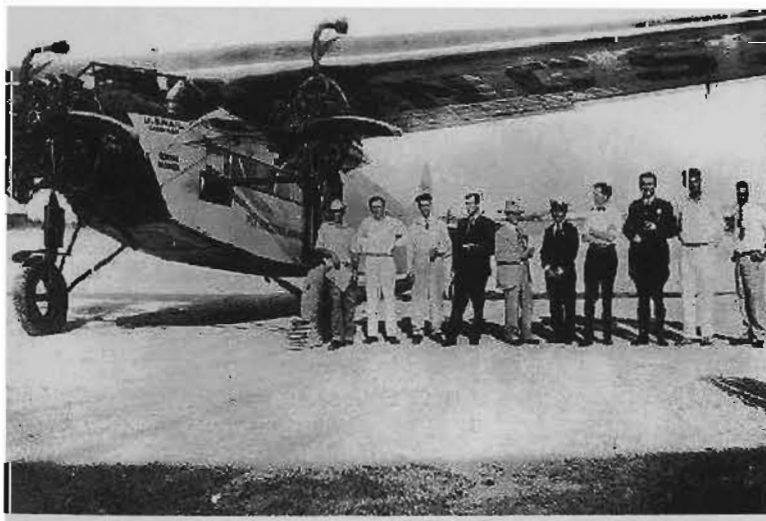


Figure 3. An October 27, 1927 photo of Pan Am's first crew of the "General Machado."

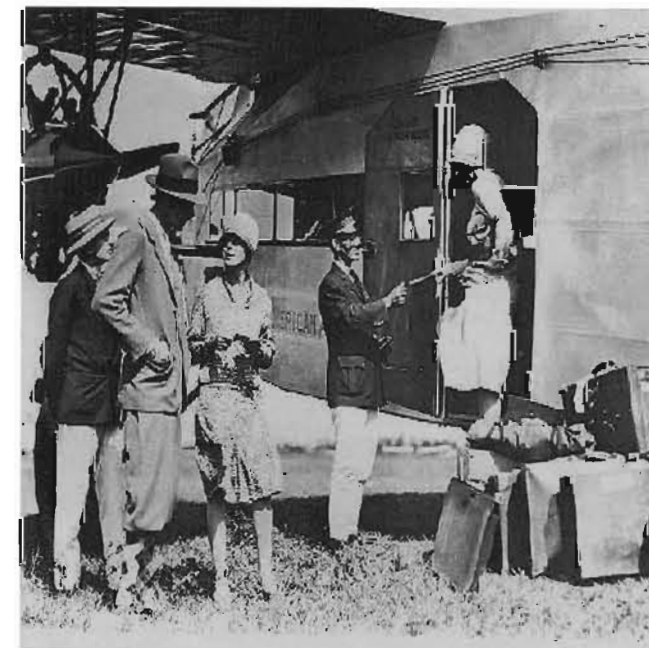


Figure 4. Pan Am's first flight from Key West to Havana.

Miami Beach was an area here wealthy business society played. Former Cuban Presidents were welcomed in these circles because of their previous associations with American tycoons, such as Carl Fisher.<sup>18</sup> For example, Cuban President, Jose Miguel Gomez, who served from 1908 to 1912, exiled himself in Miami Beach. He later invested in the development of the City of Coral Gables. In 1920, Gomez became a community leader for the City of Miami. His son, Miguel Mario Gomez



returned to Cuba where he became President of the island nation for a short term in 1936.<sup>19</sup> Another example is President Mario Garcia Menocal, who served as Cuba's president from 1912 to 1920. Menocal and his followers formed a small community around his stone mansion on Collins Avenue and Lincoln Road.<sup>20</sup>

According to Professor Gonzalez-Pando, former director of the Cuban All-History Project at Florida International University, there was another group of Cuban exiles living at the other end of the economic and political spectrum. That group was the "Directory of University Students"(DEU), who arrived in 1932 in leaky boats, and who was lead by Carlos Prio-Soccaras. The DEU were considered a separatist group because they denounced both the Machado's regime and the American investment in Cuba. Over 1,000 impoverished DEU refugees lived in the area of Northeast 1<sup>st</sup> Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Terrace.<sup>21</sup> Menocal assisted the militant group with financing because Menocal and Machado were political rivals. Menocal's social position prompted numerous fund-raisers and round table discussions with prominent social leaders such as Judge Frank Stoneman and Hugh Matheson. The DEU refugees held public demonstrations that gained publicity for their common cause, which was to overthrow the Machado administration. Later, the DEU and Menocal were instrumental in the overthrow of President Machado in the summer of 1933.<sup>22</sup>

In the 1920s and 1930s, two middle-class Cuban communities started to develop in Miami: the Northwest section of South Miami Avenue and the Riverside area. In his 1959 article, James Buchanan, staff writer for the Miami Herald, details the boundaries of these two distinct Cuban communities that coexisted in Miami. He explains that one of the Cuban settlements had an irregular configuration spanning between the area of Northwest 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue and South Miami Avenue and between Northwest 3<sup>rd</sup> Street all the way toward 58<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The other Cuban community was located in Riverside, in an area west of Flagler's Railroad tracks on Southwest 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and 8<sup>th</sup> Street. In the late 1950's, there were incidents of violence between these two Cuban colonies.<sup>23</sup> The community located in the Northwest area of South Miami Avenue was pro-Castro. Fulgencio Batista became Cuba's President in 1940, he was a ruthless dictator who persecuted the opposition, in the early 1940s, many Cubans fled to South Florida. The Cubans in Riverside were against the Castro regime. Buchanan, interviews Sergeant Charles Sapp of the Miami Police Department, who was concerned about the violence. He writes that, "Batista supporters were on one side of Flagler and pro-Castro on the other side." The owner of Paula's Café, located during this time at 435 N.E. 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, was a strong pro-Castro supporter and was concerned about the violence between these two Cuban settlements.<sup>24</sup>

The Cuban area located near Miami's Northwest 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street flourished from the 1920s until its decline in the mid 1950s. Terry Johnson King, staff writer for the Miami Herald, explains in her 1969 article, that by 1928 the first Cuban grocery store, "The Cuban Market," was opened at 1116 N.W. 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, followed by other stores located in nearby areas. These businesses served a small community of middle-class Cubans. King points out in her article that the Cubans made their homes adjacent to the wide boulevards of South Miami Avenue, which were reminiscent of Havana's residential development of Miramar.<sup>25</sup> The first Cuban consulate, established in the 1930s, was located in a small Spanish Baroque style residence at 5829 North Miami Avenue, (figure 5). The 1930 consulate building officially marked the establishment of this small Cuban community.



Figure 5. Map indicates the consulate location.



Figure 6. 1930 Cuban Consulate.

The Cuban Consulate was a typical Cuban house, according to Jose Casanova, planner with the City of Miami. Polished Cuban tile floors, dark wood trim and arched windows of colored glass above the doors were all typical elements found in Cuban residential architecture. Staff writer for The Miami Herald, Ian Glass, describes the 1929 consulate building in his 1972 article. He notes that the walls were constructed of yellow bricks imported from Cuba and which were stuccoed and painted white.<sup>26</sup> The front façade (figure 6) has the typical ample Cuban porch and the Beaux-Arts decorative details typically Cuban, of the 1930 period.<sup>27</sup> The Cuban/French style used in the consulate can also be found in the residences along El Prado in Havana built in the late 1920's. During the Great Depression, the Cuban government moved the consulate to another location, abandoning the residence. Since that time, the house has been privately owned. Today, it still stands but the surrounding Cuban neighborhood no longer exists.<sup>28</sup>



By the late 1950s, Haitian Black neighboring populations grew and expanded into this Cuban northwest neighborhood. Many Cuban families decided to relocate and joined the other small Cuban community in the Riverside area. Raymond Mohl, Professor of history at the University of Wisconsin, writes in his essay, "Miami, New Immigrant City," "They (the Cubans) settled first in what is now known as Little Havana (Riverside), a vast area spreading south and west from the central business district, Little Havana (Riverside) was once a declining section of empty lots, vacant shops, run-down businesses, and aging residential structures. Some Cubans had lived in this section of Miami since the 1930's exiles of the Cuban Revolution of 1933."<sup>29</sup> This Cuban exile community grew when it was joined by another wave of Cuban immigrants in 1952. The Cuban exiles, in the early 1950s were supporters of President Carlos Prio Socarras who was overthrown by Ruben Fulgencio Batista. The Cuban Riverside population was also increased when the Cubans living near the former Cuban consulate building in the Northwest section of South Miami Avenue Miami relocated into this area as well. By the mid-1950s, the Cuban population in Riverside had become centralized and grown to 10,000.<sup>30</sup> A photographs taken in the 1950s (figure 7 and 8), indicate the condition of 8<sup>th</sup> Street at that time.

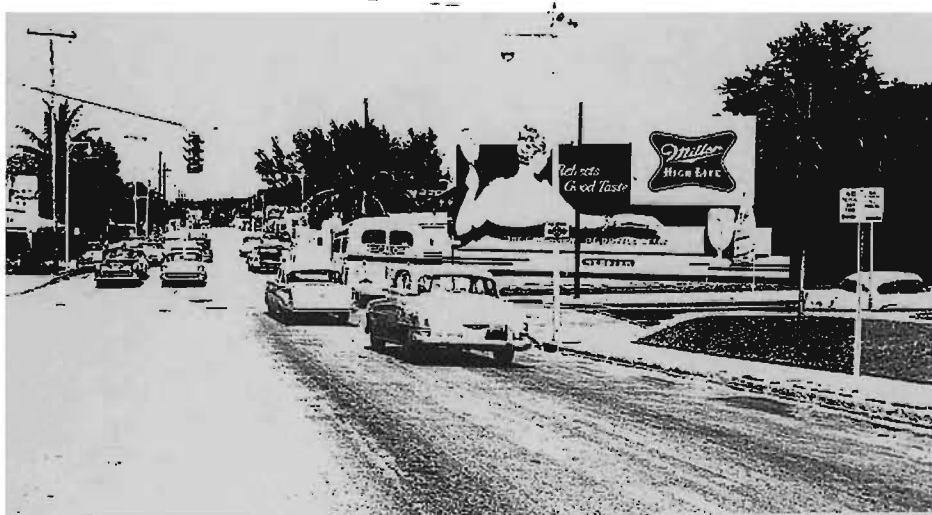


Figure 7.  
Riverside, S.W. 8<sup>TH</sup> Street & 2<sup>ND</sup> Avenue in 1952.



Figure 8.  
Riverside, S.W. 8<sup>TH</sup> Street  
37<sup>th</sup> Avenue in 1952.

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## CHAPTER 2:

### EARLY HISTORY OF 8<sup>TH</sup> STREET AND RIVERSIDE

The area of Riverside has a history dating back to its original settlers: the Tequesta Indians. Their settlements were staggered along the banks of the Miami River. Today's Jose Marti Park was the site of a Tequesta Indian camp dating back to 400 AD. The site along the Miami River was excavated in 1982.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Paul George, local historian and professor, confirms that pottery, projectile points and a woman's grave were uncovered at this site. By the eighteen-century, thousands of Tequesta Indians had either died in battle or as a result of the diseases of chicken pox and measles that were brought into the area by Europeans. Dr. Paul George describes the last major activity of the Tequesta Indians in Florida. He writes, "They (the Tequesta) petitioned the Spanish government to dispatch vessels to South Florida and enable them to move to Cuba and nearby areas. They felt Miami was too perilous."<sup>2</sup> The Spaniards send only a few ships; not to transport them all. The Tequesta who reached Cuba soon found themselves enslaved by the Spaniards.

On April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1896, Henry Flagler's railroad entered Miami. This event changed the course of Miami's history forever. On July 28<sup>th</sup>, 1896, Miami became incorporated. Arva Moore Parks, describes the area in 1896. She writes, "When the city of Miami was incorporated in 1896, the area now known as Little Havana was nothing more than a 'broken cowpath' and a sprawling wilderness populated by pines and palmettos."<sup>3</sup> A photograph taken in 1896 (figure 10), reveals the natural wilderness on 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Dr Paul George, comments on the population growth of Miami's early years. He writes, "Miami's population had ratcheted from a handful of settlers, who lived primarily along the river in 1895, to several hundred persons by the summer in 1896. Miami continued to grow quickly, despite some early setbacks. The city's population jumped past 1,660 in 1900, 5,400 in 1910."<sup>4</sup>



Figure 10. 8<sup>th</sup> Street west of 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue  
In 1896.

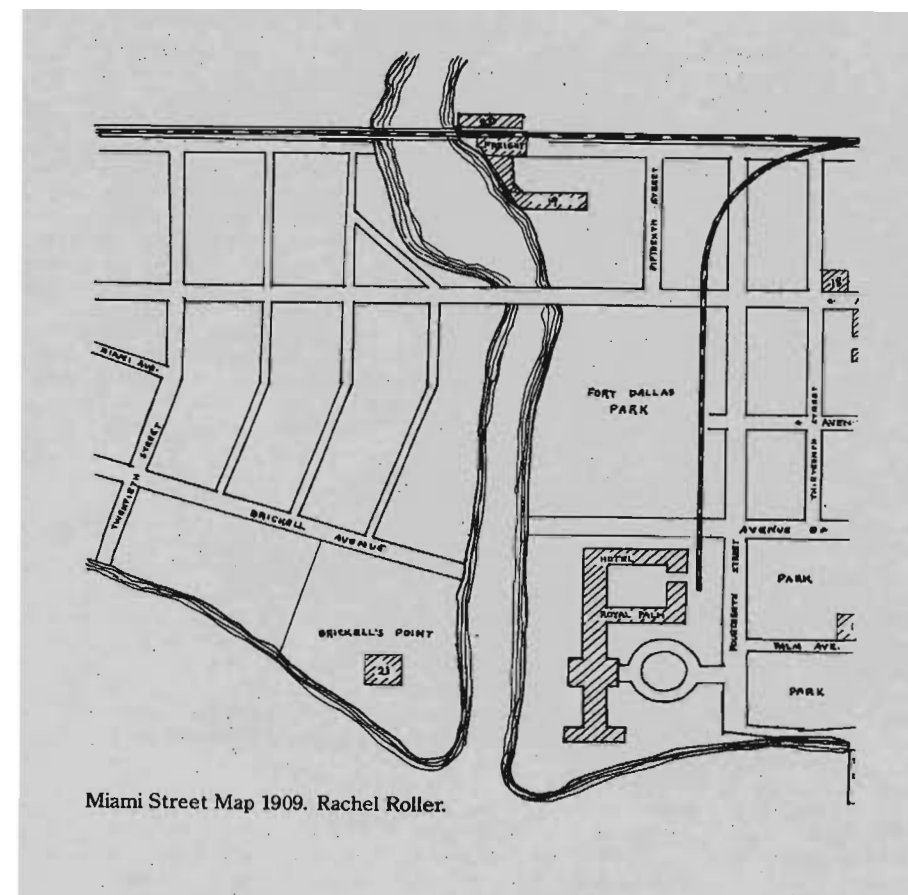


Figure 11. Map Flagler's map of  
Miami in 1909.

Flagler planned the railroad to pass through the City of Miami. A map of Miami dating back to 1909 (figure 11) indicates the railroad tracks along 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. At that time, 8<sup>th</sup> Street was called 20<sup>th</sup> Street. A photograph taken at this time (figure 12), indicates the residential development east of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue border. On 20<sup>th</sup> Street (8<sup>th</sup> Street today) west of 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, the area was scattered with Seminole Indian camps (figure 13) and settlements of Black Bahamian families.<sup>5</sup> In this photograph some pioneers can be seen along with the Seminole Indians indicating their somewhat peaceful coexistence. Lydia Martin, staff writer for The Miami Herald explains in 1999 that two “shotgun” homes dating back to the 1900s still stand on 8<sup>th</sup> Street and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The few Black families in the area occupied these homes in the early 1900s.<sup>6</sup>



Figure 12. Development east of 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.

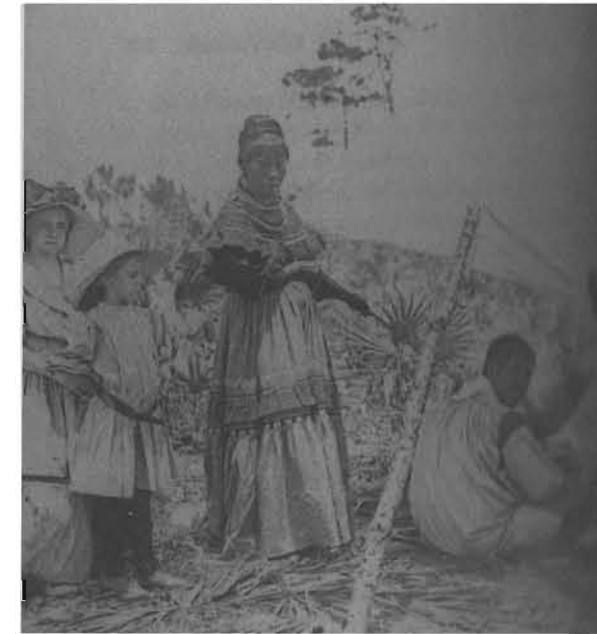


Figure 13. Indian Camps west of SW 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.

This area was later named Riverside it was largely populated by Jewish families. The first Jewish family to settle in Miami was the Cohen's. Isodore Cohen was a Russian Jew who migrated to the United States in 1883. Cohen settled in Miami in 1896, just prior to Miami's incorporation.<sup>7</sup> Cohen established a clothing store on the southern banks of the Miami River and became a leading merchant. Jewish families migrated from Key West, and others came with Flagler's railroad to Miami thereby increasing the Jewish population. By the end of 1896, the Jewish population had increased to 25 families.<sup>8</sup> Cohen's store, a wooden structure (figure 14), was typical of the construction at the time; all of the downtown area was constructed in a similar manner. Unfortunately, on December 25, 1896, there was a destructive fire that wiped out both Cohen's store and nearly all of the downtown area. Following the fire, a yellow fever epidemic caused the Miami Jewish population to decrease to only two families by the early 1900s. This set of unfortunate circumstances delayed the establishment of the Riverside community.<sup>9</sup> Despite these misfortunes, Miami's population continued to grow in the early 1900s. Several pioneers were strong business promoters of the area. Two of them were, General Samuel Lawrence and Samuel A. Belcher who owned large homesteads in the Riverside area.



Figure 14. Isidore Cohen's store.



Figure 15. Samuel Belcher and his family in their home.

One of the most important early settlers in Riverside was General Samuel Lawrence, a wealthy investor from Medford, Massachusetts. Nancy Liebman, local politician and author writes, "General Samuel C. Lawrence was a pioneer in the actual settlement and development of Miami and Dade County. He purchased 700 acres of land in 1899 and called it Lawrence Grove.<sup>10</sup> Lawrence developed this land into a model farm, growing exotic tropical fruits and flowers. The farm was shown to tourist groups with the purpose of promoting Miami to Northerners.<sup>11</sup> His homestead was located on the north side of 8<sup>th</sup> Street, and abutted the Miami River between 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue. After his death in 1911, the land was sold and then platted into residential lots.<sup>12</sup>

Samuel A. Belcher moved from Georgia in 1891. His homestead was located on Southwest 8<sup>th</sup> Street and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Belcher planted fruits, vegetables and coontie.<sup>13</sup> The Belcher's home (figure 15), had generous verandas and overhangs appropriate for Miami's climate. It should be noted that the surrounding resemble northern style frame homes that were more suited for cold climates. The settlers built their homes with familiar forms and architectural solutions repeating construction practices used in the North. Belcher was a Dade County Commissioner from 1915 to 1917. According to Nancy Liebman, Governor Park Tramell appointed Samuel Belcher to the Central Highway Association. This association adopted the Tamiami Trail as a project in 1915.<sup>14</sup>



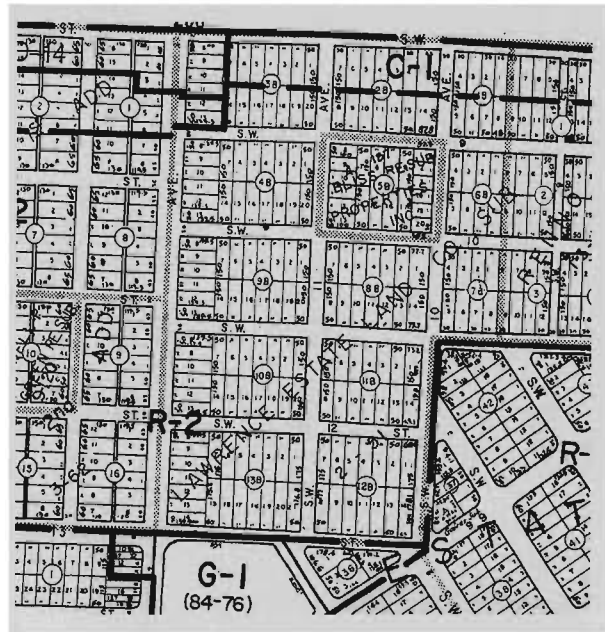
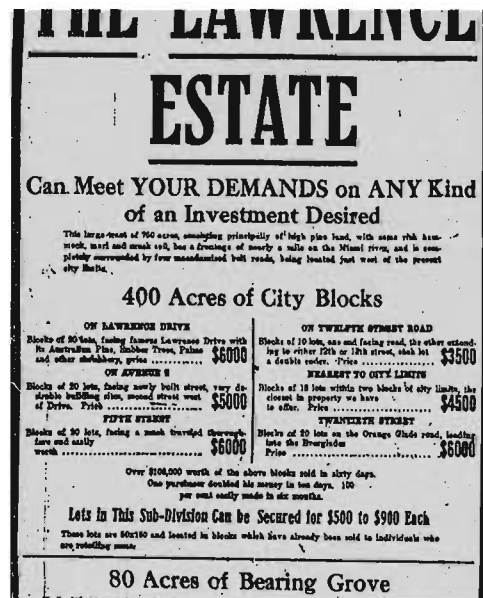


Figure 16. Lawrence Estate  
Auction February 18, 1913.

Figure 17. Lawrence Estate Plot plan.

From 1912 to 1923 many of the pioneer homesteads were developed into residential lots to accommodate the rapid growth of population. Bethel B. and John R, and Smiley M. Tatum, were prosperous real estate promoters at the time. They were colorful characters from Dawson, Georgia who arrived in Miami around the 1890s. The subdivisions that comprised the area of Riverside were the Lawrence Estates, Shenandoah Subdivision, Westmoreland/Harrison Subdivision, Avacado Park Subdivision, and Manleys Resubdivision.<sup>15</sup>

The Lawrence Estates was platted into residential lots by the Tatum Brothers on November 3, 1912. To promote sales, an auction was held on February 18, 1913 by the Carolina Development Company and it was advertised in the Miami Metropolis (figure 16). The first lot sold for \$600.00.<sup>16</sup> Current boundaries of this subdivision are between Southwest 12<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenues and between Southwest 8<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets. Today the plot plan of this area still has the Lawrence Estate name (figure 17).<sup>17</sup>

The Shenandoah Subdivision was platted by the Shenandoah Improvement Corporation on April 30, 1923. This subdivision was originally part of the Samuel Belcher homestead. Its current boundaries are irregular: it is located in the vicinity of Southwest 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenues and between 8<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Streets.<sup>18</sup>

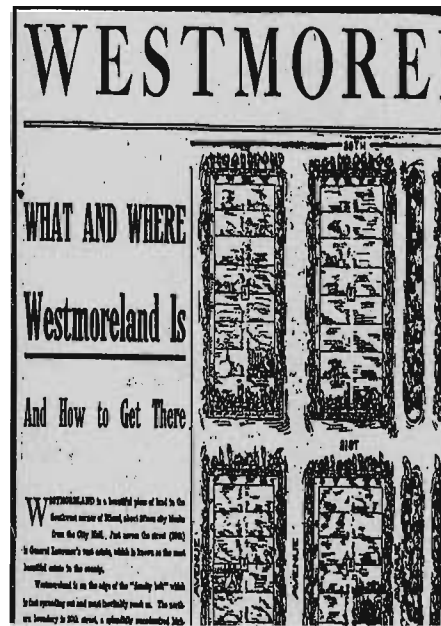


Figure 18. Westmoreland Auction Announcement.

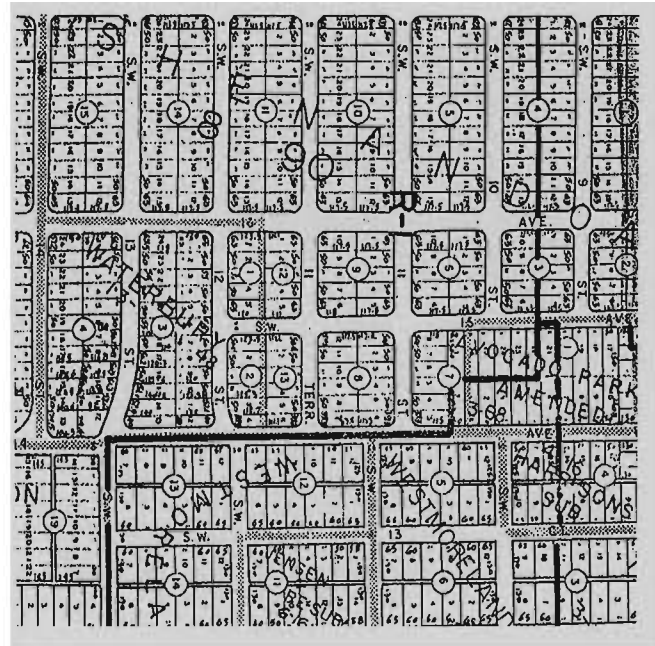


Figure 19. Plot plan showing subdivision.

On October 31, 1912, Westmoreland Subdivision was platted by A. A. Boggs and Clifton D. Benson. A newspaper article written in the Miami Herald in 1916 entitled, "A Real Auction Sale of Lots in Westmoreland," advertises the lots as "high class,"<sup>19</sup> Auction announcements for the Westmoreland lots were published in the local newspapers (figure 18). The boundaries of this subdivision, today, are between Southwest 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Avenues and between Southwest 11<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets. The plot plan of this area shows several small neighboring subdivisions (figure 19). The small Harrison Subdivision was a re-subdivision of a portion of the larger Westmoreland Subdivision. Its current boundaries are between Southwest 10<sup>th</sup> Street to 13<sup>th</sup> Court and between Southwest 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Streets.<sup>20</sup>

Avacado Park Subdivision was platted by William Harrison and Earl and Ida Fonda on October 8, 1913. The actual boundaries of this subdivision are from Southwest 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> Avenues and between Southwest 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Streets. The other small subdivision in the area is the Manley subdivision. Lester B. and Josephine Manley certified the Manley subdivision on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1923. Its current boundaries are from Southwest 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> Avenues and between Southwest 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Streets.<sup>21</sup>

The subdivisions were initially platted with small lots. It can be concluded that the small lots created an urban structure, which left a permanent its mark on the area. The scale of the lots made the area affordable. In the future, many immigrant groups often settled in this area.



Figure 20. Flagler Bridge 1950.

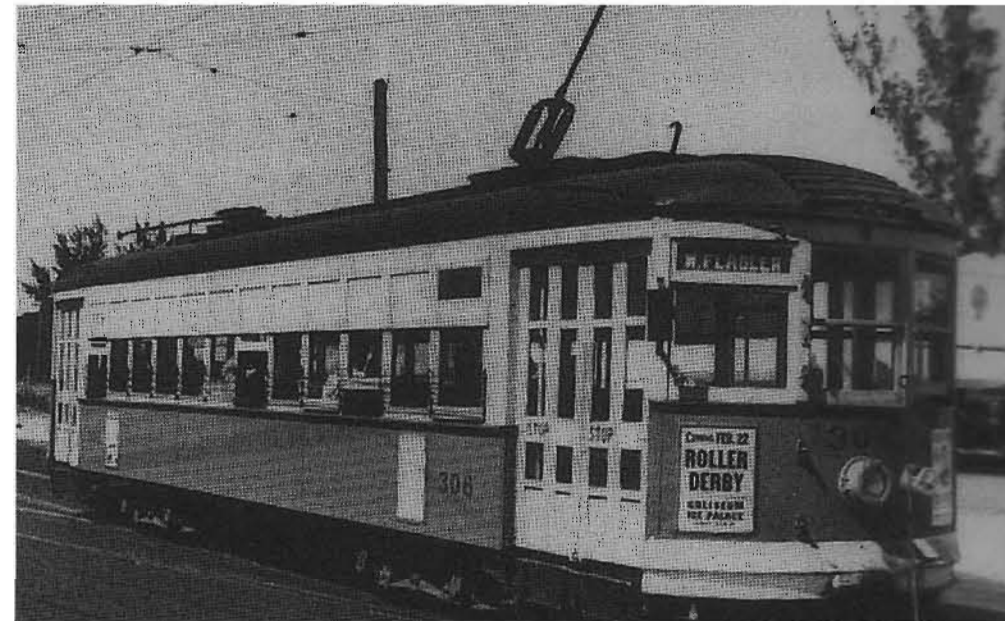


Figure 21. Trolley on Flagler & 22 Avenue.

Riverside was connected to the downtown commercial center by Flagler Street Bridge. When the privately-owned bridge opened in 1905, tolls were expensive, which made travel problematic. The City of Miami purchased The Flagler Street Bridge in 1909 and removed the tolls, making Riverside's connection to the downtown area easier. A photograph taken in 1950, shows the bridge (figure 20) over the Miami River. Dr. Paul George, states that the completion and extensions of the electric trolley line increased the property values in the Riverside subdivisions by almost 50 per cent.<sup>22</sup> Trolley car # 360 (figure 21) traveled east and west along Flagler Street. Eighth Street started to develop as a commercial artery in 1920. This commercial street forms the eastern end of the Tamiami Trail, a road that connects the east and west coasts of Florida.

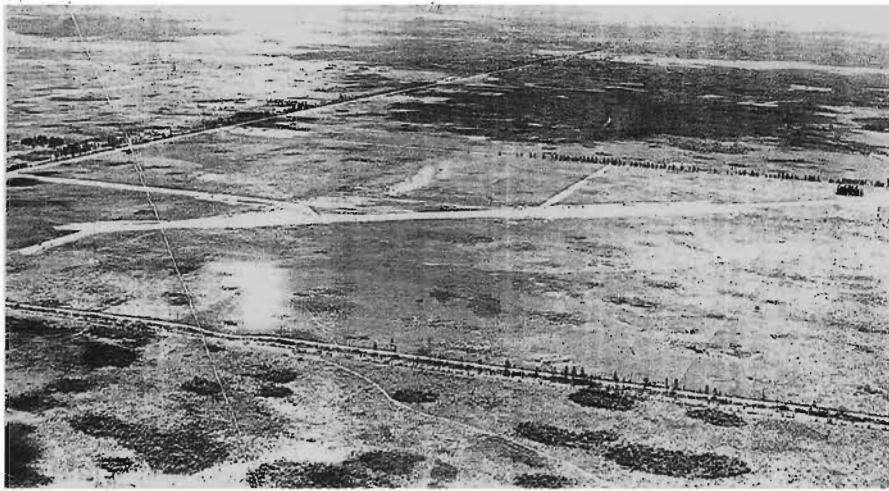


Figure 22. Tamiami Trail, 1950.



Figure 23. Tamiami Trail April 4<sup>th</sup> 1951.

The Tamiami Trail was a dream of Captain James F. Jaudon of Miami and Francis W. Perry of Fort Myers.<sup>23</sup> The connection between Miami and Tampa would economically benefit the two cities increasing trade and tourism. A 1948 article in the Miami News entitled, "Tamiami Trail Was A Rugged Job: Road's 20<sup>th</sup> Birthday Recalls Builder's Woes," describes the tedious road-building task. Jaudon and Perry presented their project in an informal meeting in Tallahassee in April 1915. In August 1915, the Central Florida Highway Association adopted the project.<sup>24</sup> Because of the difficult environmental conditions and lack of modern equipment the construction of the road was very slow. On April 4, 1923, an expedition comprised of 26 men in seven Model T Fords traveled from Tampa to Miami. The purpose of the expedition was to determine how the road construction could be expedited; the expedition crew was reported lost. When found they confirmed the difficult environmental conditions that would make the road construction nearly impossible.<sup>25</sup> By 1924, only 14 miles of the road were actually finished. Using an average of 40 boxes of dynamite per day for blasting the limestone foundation of the Everglades, the road was completed on April 25, 1928.<sup>26</sup> Even though the Tamiami Trail was completed in 1928, development along its edges was slow to follow. These early 1950s photographs (figures 22,23), of the Tamiami Trail were taken west of 67<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The eastern end of the great Tamiami Trail from Second Avenue to Seventeen Avenue, however, began developing into an important commercial artery in the early 1920s. The land boom of the mid-1920s was a direct motivator for the development of 8<sup>th</sup> Street as a commercial artery. Commerce on Eighth Street served the surrounding residential neighborhoods.<sup>27</sup>

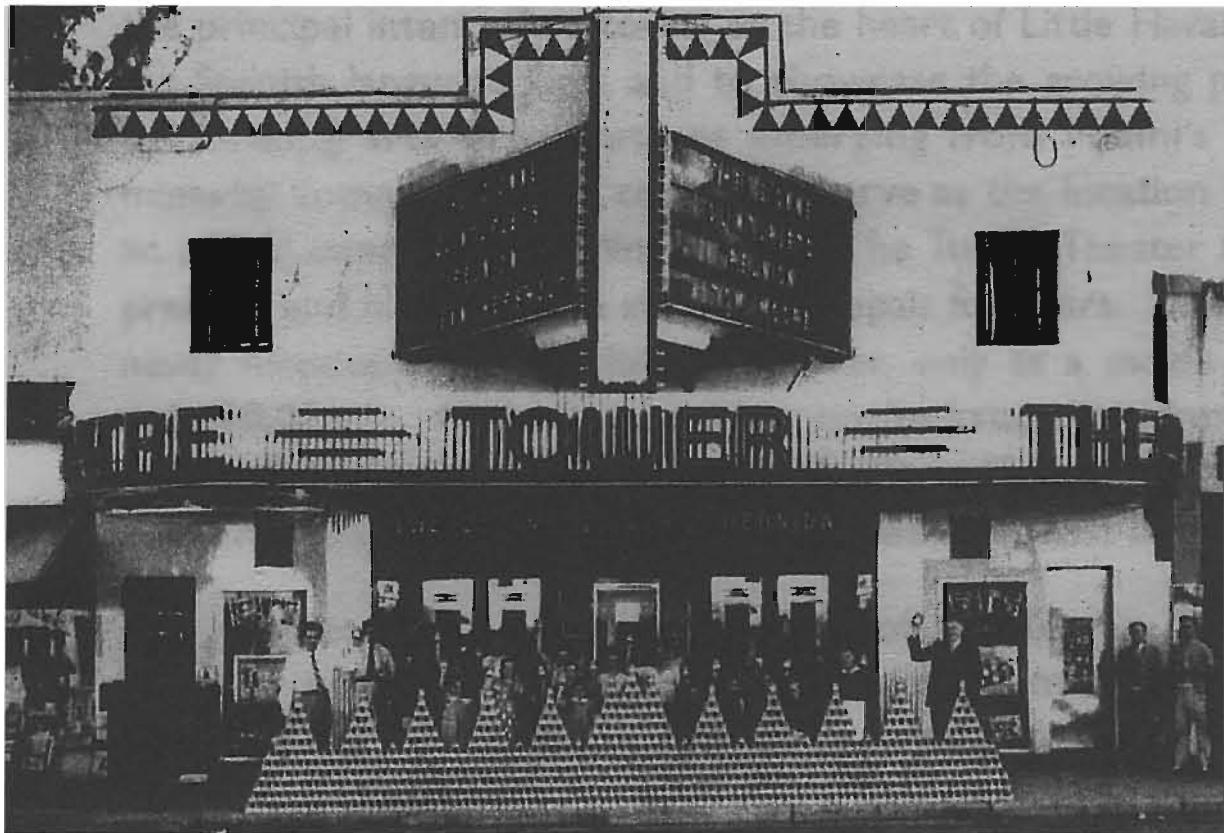


Figure 24. Tower Theater before remodeling in 1931.

From 1926 to 1956, numerous Jewish businesses were operating on 8<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>28</sup> The importance of commerce in Jewish culture prompted the entrepreneurs businessmen to built buildings along Eight Street that would house their ethnic shops. This community grew and prospered economically. Temple Beth El was established on Southwest 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and residences were constructed in the neighboring area. The landmark 1,000-seat Tower Theater on 8<sup>th</sup> Street and 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue opened its doors on December 10<sup>th</sup>, 1926. A photograph of the Tower Theater on its opening, depicts an orchestra playing on a make-shift stage celebrating this event. The Polk Index, a local telephone directory published at the time, lists the business operating on this street by year. Numerous ethnic Jewish businesses such as delicatessens, Kosher meats were established on 8<sup>th</sup> Street between the 1930s and mid 1950s.<sup>29</sup> Riverside's 8<sup>th</sup> Street in 1951 was a thriving commercial artery (figures 25 and 26). By 1957, the Jewish community began to prosper economically, which resulted in them relocating to larger and newer homes in other Miami suburbs such as Westchester and South Kendall.<sup>30</sup>





Figure 25. 1951 Riverside 8<sup>th</sup> Street & 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue.



Figure 26. 1951 Riverside & 32 Avenue.

Cuban owned businesses were operating on Eighth Street prior to 1960. According to the Polk Index, and chapter 6, Property Histories on *Calle Ocho*, Cuban-owned businesses were established on 8<sup>th</sup> Street by 1957. Gort Photo Studio, Alvarez Brothers Leather Goods, Latin Motors, Tropical Market, Cubano Motors and the Madrid Restaurant were the Cuban-owned establishments that began to prosper in this area.<sup>31</sup>

It can be concluded that three factors prompted the 1960 Cubans to settle in the area of Eighth Street. The first factor is the established commercial urban structure created by the Jewish businessmen. These small shops along Eighth Street were ideal for the newly arrived Cubans. Similar to the Jewish culture, commerce plays an important role in Cuban society. Cubans have been the center of Caribbean commerce for approximately 400 years. Many of the 1960s Cuban exiles were businessmen who had commercial establishments on the island and were familiar with the American market. The second factor was the existing Cuban colony that was established in this area prior to 1959. The third factor was the area's cycle of economic decline. Many Jewish businesses prospered and relocated to more prestigious addresses and some fled due to the large Cuban influx to the area. This produced affordable real estate.<sup>32</sup>



Figure 27. 8<sup>TH</sup> Street & 22 Avenue in September, 1961.

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## CHAPTER 3:

### CUBAN MIGRATION 1960 TO 1973

In order to comprehend the enormous influence that the Cuban migrations between 1960 and 1973 had on the development of *Calle Ocho*, it is imperative to understand the nature of the refugees who were entering South Florida during this time. Three major factors characterized these Cuban exiles in the 1960s: the first is that these individuals were, for the most part, the upper-section of Cuban society; the second fact is that these Cuban refugees were political exiles, stripped of all their material possessions; and the third is their vast numbers.



Figure 28. 1960 Well-dressed Cuban refugees arrive in Miami International Airport.

An article about the 1960's Cuban migration entitled, "The Latinization of Miami", written for The New York Times Magazine, by staff writer, Herbert Burkholz, describes the type of refugees arriving in South Florida. He writes, "The first wave of refugees contained a disproportionately large number of professionals (not

only doctors and lawyers, but engineers, designers and importers), a natural result of the Communist overthrow of the Cuban establishment, who created a boom of their own through a series of economic ventures based on their special knowledge and expertise.”<sup>1</sup>

Most Cuban immigrants regardless of when they fled Cuba, consider themselves political exiles. From the Gomez administration in 1912 to the present Castro regime unstable politics have produced them. The 1960 exiles, however, were the first to have all their private and commercial property confiscated by Castro’s communist regime. Not only were these refugees forced to abandon their country and their loved ones, but also all of their material possessions were taken from them. This circumstance is what makes the 1960s Castro exiles different from previous Cuban exiles.

Cuban exiles are also different from many immigrant groups in the United States. Arva Moore Parks, official historian for the State of Florida, describes the Cuban immigrants sentiment as follows, “Unlike other émigrés, the Cubans did not come to America in search of the “American Dream” they dreamed of returning home.”<sup>2</sup> This important fact resulted in the strong ethnic identity on *Calle Ocho* that is still apparent after 40 years. In 1959, no one anticipated that 24 years later nearly 10 percent of the island population would be living in the United States, and mostly in the area of South Florida.<sup>3</sup>

By late 1960 there were 37,000 Cubans had poured into Miami. Soon, the refugees were so numerous that Florida requested Federal Aid to alleviate the situation.<sup>4</sup> From 1960 to 1962, 300,000 Cubans fled to South Florida. In October 1962, the Cuban Missile crisis brought the Soviet Union and the United States to the brink of war. Cuba’s borders were closed at this time, which prevented Cubans from leaving the island.<sup>5</sup>

In 1960, many Cuban parents were frantic because their teenage boys were to be drafted into Castro’s Communist army, and young children were to receive Communist indoctrination, which was being taught in the schools. From 1960 to 1962, 14,000 children were smuggled into the United States by Operation Pedro Pan, which was sponsored by the Catholic Church. Monsignor Bryan Walsh was the director of the Catholic Welfare Bureau in 1960. According to Monsignor Walsh, in December 1960 he was contacted and informed by the State Department that 200 unattended Cuban children were on their way to Miami. The

Eisenhower administration explained that only an independent organization could sponsor the children; therefore, Monsignor Walsh accepted the challenge and directed the Pedro Pan Operation.<sup>6</sup>

In October 19<sup>th</sup>, 1962, Castro closed Cuba's borders, making it illegal for anyone to leave the island. Even under these circumstances, 56,000 refugees managed to escape to South Florida by using small boats and even tire inner tubes. Estevan Torres, present owner of the Casa de Los Trucos, located on 1343 S.W. 8<sup>TH</sup> Street, recalls the dangerous ordeal of reaching our U.S. shores in a 14-foot boat.<sup>7</sup> Unrest inside Cuba continued to worsen, prompting Castro to open the Cuban port of *Camarioca* in 1965 in order to release all who did not agree with the revolution. These people were publicly humiliated and called "guzanos" or worms.<sup>8</sup>

Miami relatives, however, were allowed to retrieve their families from the Cuban Port of *Camarioca*. Numerous families purchased or borrowed boats in a desperate attempt to be reunited with their loved ones. Helga Silva, staff writer for the Miami Herald, in her 1976 article, reports that, at this time, 5,000 refugees entered South Florida. In order to prevent a disorganized migration from Cuba, the United States agreed to commence the "Freedom Flights" in December, 1965.<sup>9</sup> Within the next seven years, 200 refugees arrived twice a day for five days a week. From 1965 to 1973, the "Freedom Flights" brought 300,000 Cubans refugees to South Florida. The "Freedom Flights" refugees were older, and were mostly women; since males between the ages of 15 to 25 were not allowed to leave. Castro learned his lesson from the 1960 exodus and, therefore, did not allow professionals and skilled technical workers to leave the island.<sup>10</sup> David Rieff, author of "The Second Havana," notes that, at the end of 1973; approximately half-a-million Cubans were living in the United States. In the early 1960s more than 100,000 Cubans were relocated by the Federal government to other parts of the nation. The cold northern weather and the separation from family and friends made most Cubans exiles return to Miami.<sup>11</sup>

In conclusion, the 1960 to 1973 Cuban migration had a great impact on the small tourist town of Miami. This migration like the Flagler's railroad changed the course of Miami's history. The businessmen and professionals that made-up the majority of this group, made significant economic in-roads for the others Cuban immigrant waves to follow. Using their ingenuity and their knowledge of the American commercial system, they assimilated economically in record time.

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## CHAPTER 4

### ***CALLE OCHO:***

### **THE TRANSFORMATION: 1960 TO 1973**



Figure 29. 8<sup>th</sup> Street & 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue in 1969 signs are transforming into Spanish.



Figure 30. 8<sup>th</sup> Street & 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue on December 24<sup>th</sup>, 1968.

In the 1960s, Cubans established their businesses on *Calle Ocho*. The commercial urban structure originated by the Jewish community suited the newly arrived Cuban businesses. The area's economic decline made the real estate affordable. In addition there was a growing Cuban community with established business on 8<sup>th</sup> Street prior to 1960. To reinforce the Cuban influx to this area, according to David Rieff's 1987 article entitled, the "Second Havana," which appeared in The New Yorker Magazine, the City of Miami attempted to segregate the Cuban population by not issuing businesses licenses to Cubans north of 8<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>1</sup> Certainly, there was, and still exist, a great deal of animosity toward Cubans.<sup>2</sup> Rob Elder, staff writer for The Miami Herald, in his 1976 article title, "Cubans look to the Ballot Box", reflects the general view of Cubans by others in Miami: "Cubans are hardworking and clannish, they hold themselves aloof from other





## CAFÉ CUBANO:

### A MAJOR FACTOR IN CALLE OCHO'S ETHNIC IDENTITY



Figure 32. 1950s Open-air bodegas in Cuba.



Figure 33. Havana Vieja's coffee counters.

Cubans strived to maintain their cultures and familiar daily routines in this new environment. The Cuban coffee break was re-born on 8<sup>th</sup> Street in the early 1960s. Dating back to colonial times, the tradition of the Cuban coffee break was well-rooted in Cuban customs. In the coffee plantations of colonial Cuba, commercial coffee machines, fired by wood-chip stoves, brewed great quantities of coffee at one time. When the aroma of the coffee filled the air and the coffee attendant rang the bell, workers knew it was time for their coffee break. It was their moment to relax, discuss ideas and recharge for a few minutes before returning to the fields.<sup>6</sup> Jose Enrique Souto, vice president of sales for Pilon Espresso Coffee in Miami, recalls this tradition: "It used to be called the 3-cent coffee. We would have 10-minute coffee breaks at least three times a day, including more with meals. It's a tradition that has been carried on since the 1700's."<sup>7</sup> For more than 125 years, family-owned plantations cultivated high quality coffee made from Arabica beans. When Castro took over all privately owned businesses in 1959, many of these families fled to South Florida, carrying with them their coffee beans and their ancient recipe for cultivating this coffee. Today the ancient Cuban coffee break tradition is transformed and blended into South Florida's urban life.<sup>8</sup>



The Cuban coffee break tradition was incorporated into the South Florida landscape with the transformation of the café windows in the storefronts of 8<sup>th</sup> Street. In Cuba, coffee was brewed in open-air bodegas and sandwich shops that brought people into the establishment from the sidewalks. A photograph taken in Cuba in the early 1950s (figure 32), shows the open-air bodega. A more recent photograph (figure 33), indicates the strong coffee counter relationship with the pedestrians in *La Havana Vieja*. The café windows of *Calle Ocho* facilitate the continuation of the Cuban coffee break tradition by offering the opportunity for casual conversation in an urban setting. The café windows also physically altered the design of the standard storefronts, therefore, creating a unique ethnic identity.

Since 1961, Cuban exiles adapted the existing storefronts by creating a window so that coffee could be served to pedestrians on the sidewalks. The consumption of this intense coffee naturally sparks animated discussions ranging from politics to baseball to local gossip.<sup>9</sup> According to Monica Ponce De Leon, architect and urban planner, "These (café windows) are extremely popular for people on their way to work in the morning, coming back at night from the movies, or after particular events, when the crowd in the lots can number up to 50 people. Ironically, it is here where the Cuban community exchanges discussions about Castro, recounts old times in Cuba or maps out its role in Miami's political life."<sup>10</sup> The café windows provide an environment where the community can network. Bill Barry, staff writer for The Miami Herald in his 1967 article entitled, "Cuban Dream at their Cafetins," discusses the role of the café window as centers of neighborhood news. This information could range from the location of a loved one or friend, job openings, or the latest political news from Cuba.<sup>11</sup> It can be assumed that the café windows were instrumental in the economic and political success and assimilation of the Cubans in South Florida. The café windows have also developed with time becoming more adaptable and functional. A typical café window in the mid-1960s (figure 34), already shows signs of adaptation, notice the Spanish advertisement on the upper glass window panel.



Figure 34. A 1960s café window in *Calle Ocho*.

Existing 1960s commercial glass storefront on *Calle Ocho* blocked the strong relation to the streets that Cubans were used to in Havana. The Miami air-conditioned commercial establishments did not allow for the open-air configuration that was found in Cuba's shops. The Cuban exiles adapted by creating a window where coffee was served to pedestrians.

Café windows have developed throughout the years to meet new functional needs. Juan Benitez, former owner of The Crown Trading Company located at 1105 S.W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street, recalls the first café window being remodeled in the corner grocery store called The Cuban Market. He said, "I remember the remodeling of the small market to accommodate the new espresso machine and counter. The window was a small opening on the wall about 2'-6" x 2'-0. It was to accommodate a standard hung window. The coffee counter was simply pushed against the interior wall; it was not part of the window design as seen today."<sup>12</sup> In addition, the café windows have developed glass display areas above and below the counter (figure 43 and 35). These display areas exhibit cigarettes or tobaccos sold along with

the coffee and serve as areas to advertise as well. The horizontal surface of the counter has been integrated with the window and extends to the outside, creating a ledge for the customer's comfort. Café windows have also become very wide, providing extra space for the customers and for the traditional cooler that contains free, cold water. Large numbers of customers linger conversing and sipping their coffees interrupting the pedestrian flow of *Calle Ocho*. In an attempt to remedy this situation, café windows are usually set back from the sidewalk into the property, creating ample room to accommodate large groups of customers (figure 36). Most café windows have a covered overhang in order to protect the customers from the sun and rain. El Pub Restaurant at 1548, located on the southern corner of 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue and *Calle Ocho* (figure 37), has a café window that is an example of its evolution. A wide arch trimmed with cobalt blue ceramic tile frames the café window. The window is at approximate 45-degree angle from the street, which creates ample room for various customers to linger and chat.



Figure 35. Café windows have developed since the 1960s to include display windows.



Figure 36. Café windows are sometimes recessed into the property to provide ample space for the customers.



Figure 37. El Pub Restaurant's café window is a great example of this evolution.

According to Manolo Reyes, former Latin News Director for Channel 4 WTVJ (CBS), café windows add revenue to businesses, and therefore, have been added to various commercial establishments such as grocery stores, laundromats, bakeries and restaurants.<sup>13</sup> The most common businesses to have café windows were sandwich shops, restaurants, bakeries and groceries shops. Traditionally, these types of businesses brewed coffee in Cuba. Manolo Reyes reported on this trend in December 1973. He states, "A strange phenomenon is now sweeping Greater Miami's Cuban colony-and that FIRST is the combining of Laundromats and

coffee shops under a single roof. There are at least half a dozen of these unusual business enterprises that have spouted in Dade County during the past year.”<sup>14</sup> In any business where a café window has been adapted, it has facilitated a strong relationship with the pedestrian; and this is an essential factor in the traditional Cuban urban fabric that adds ethnic identity to this otherwise ordinary street. Café windows, today, can be found in almost every shopping center around South Florida.<sup>15</sup>

*Café* windows can be seen as an example of the adaptability of the Cubans exiles. Cuban found a way of having their daily shot of Cuban coffee and promote the social interaction that it accompanies by the creation of these windows. Both coffee and social contacts are essential part of Cuban daily life.



Figure 38. Cafe Windows.

## CUBAN RESTAURANTS:

### CUBAN CUISINE PROMOTES ITS CULTURE

In *Calle Ocho*, many Cuban exiles naturally continued with the same line of business they had in Cuba. Felipe Vals, for example, was in the restaurant business in Cuba, after his arrival in South Florida, he opened the Badias Restaurant in 1965. Vals operated Badias until 1990.<sup>16</sup> In 1990 Karen Branch, staff writer for The Miami Herald, explained that Juan Saizarbitoria former owner of Juanitos Centro Vazco started his restaurant in Cuba in 1940. In 1960 Saizarbitoria fled Cuba and started a restaurant again on *Calle Ocho* and 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Sazaibitoria designed his restaurant in a similar fashion to the one he left in Cuba.<sup>17</sup>

Typical Cuban restaurants on *Calle Ocho* are modeled after the sandwich shops and restaurants found in 1950 Havana, which were in turn influenced by the American 1930s dinners and soda fountain shops. Accessible air travel to Havana and heavy American investments started in the mid 1920s, influenced restaurant design as well as many aspects of Cuban culture. Santiago Areneguei, architect and professor at Miami-Dade Community College, recalls the restaurants designed by his father's architecture firm in Havana, Consultants Executives S.A. He notes that the typical casual sandwich shop was very similar to the 1930s American dinner or soda fountain shops.<sup>18</sup> The counter and fixed-stool seating in both the American and Cuban restaurants are very similar. The soda fountain area in the American restaurant, however, has been replaced by the sandwich-making station in the Cuban version. Areneguie recalls the sandwich shops in Cuba: El Recodo was located in Havana and the 23y12 located in El Vedado. Both sandwich shops were modeled after the typical 1930 American dinner.

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The Cuban Restaurant's typical interior planning attracts an unexpected mix of customers. As Monica Ponce De Leon, points out, "On any given day one might see the mayor of the City of Miami on a family meal, a banker with an out-of town client and a construction worker on lunch break."<sup>20</sup> This varied mix is facilitated



by the restaurant's interior plan. They provide counter seating, individual booths or tables, and party rooms for large gatherings or private affairs. Customers who come in for a quick bite normally sit at the counter. Counter seating provides a view of the skilled sandwich-maker preparing your request on the spot. Popular items such as Cuban sandwiches are normally prepared ahead of time to speed up the serving process. The function of the tables, booths and private rooms are similar to other area restaurants.<sup>21</sup>



Figure 39. El Pub decorative map of Cuba.



Figure 40. Sandwich counter with the hanging cured hams.

The interiors of most Cuban/American restaurants along *Calle Ocho* are decorated with nostalgic mementos of 1950s Cuba. In El Pub Restaurant (figure 39), a huge map of Cuba covers a large wall in the dinning area. The other walls are covered with numerous vintage photographs of 1950s Cuba. Heliodora Coro, owner of El Pub and El Esquisito Restaurants both located on *Calle Ocho*. Coro explains in an interview with Ilia Maldonado a University of Miami student who

participated in “Exploring the Culture of Little Havana Project,” that the mementos bring back good memories of Cuba before 1959.<sup>22</sup> The strong Spanish influence not only can be tasted in their cuisine, but also seen their décor. In Spanish country restaurants, it is customary to hang from the ceiling, cured hams. These hams will eventually be prepared in the meals. Many Cuban restaurants have also adopted this tradition. Cured Spanish hams hang from the ceiling as decorations at the sandwich counter at El Pub Restaurant (figure40).<sup>23</sup>

From 1960 to 1973, Cuban restaurants along *Calle Ocho* contributed to the ethnic definition on this commercial artery. Cuban Restaurants bring a sense of nostalgia with their typical cuisine and visual reminders of the homeland.

## TOBACCO MANUFACTURING:



Figure 41. Cigar-rolling skills are  
Passed down by generations.



Figure 42. Most tobacco hand rollers  
Are second generation Cuban. (right)

The production of Cuban-style cigars has been an important industry along *Calle Ocho* since 1957. According to Cynthia Corzo, staff writer for The Miami Herald, "Cuban cigars are synonymous with the memories of a pre-Castro Cuba."<sup>24</sup> Since the 1700's, tobacco was a strong component of the Cuban economy. Tobacco cultivation and manufacturing has been an industry that is well-rooted in Cuban customs and traditions. The powerful Cuban cigar industry was at the heart of the



initiation of the 1895 Cuban War of Independence. In late 1800s, the Lectors, men who would read to the cigar rollers in the factories while they worked, would read literature that eventually influenced the population to revolt against the Spaniards. The Spaniards were considered a drain to the Cuban economy much as the Americans thought of the English during the colonial revolution. Spaniard imposition of high tariffs on tobacco prompted the migration of numerous tobacco manufacturers to South Florida in the mid-1800s. The industry flourished, died down during the Great Depression, only to revive again in the late 1950's and early 1960s.<sup>25</sup>

Cuban cigars are still considered the best in the world. Because of the embargo, these made in Cuba are illegal to sell in the United States. The Cuban exiles however brought with them the cigar rolling skills passed on by generations. Most of the businesses on 8<sup>th</sup> Street import the tobacco leaves they use in cigar manufacturing from Central America. The seeds used to grow these leaves were smuggled years ago from Cuba in diplomatic pouches. Frank Soler, staff writer for The Miami Herald, reports in his 1960 article that 20 small tobacco-manufacturing businesses have blossomed on *Calle Ocho*, making this area the largest tobacco hand-rolling center in the nation, Juan Sosa began manufacturing "Havaneros" Cuban-style cigars on *Calle Ocho* in 1961. Eight years later, his business produced from 70,000 to 80,000 cigars per month. On an average, in 1969, these small businesses produced one million expensive, high quality cigars each month. In 1996, the production of cigars was not enough to satisfy the market demand.<sup>26</sup>



Figure 43. Typical cigar manufacturing on *Calle Ocho*.

Like the *café* windows, the small cigar manufacturing stores on *Calle Ocho* have adapted existing buildings in order to suit their needs: a typical storefront (figure 43) has been converted for this purpose. Because of their glass storefronts, these stores provide a strong visual connection with the street. Tobacco rolling workstations can be seen from the sidewalk. The storefronts are also used to display tobacco manufacturing artifacts (figure 44), many of them having been brought from Cuba. The tobacco manufacturing establishments have become a popular stop for the tourist busses that visit the area on a regular basis.<sup>27</sup>



Figure 44. Typical cigar manufacturing display in storefront windows.

## MONUMENTS:



Figure 45 and 46. The Cuban Memorial Boulevard located on *Calle Ocho* and 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Monuments and planned public spaces were commonplace in Cuba. On *Calle Ocho*, the 1960s exile Cuban community started to create public spaces within a commercial row and has marked them with memorials. Gisela Lopez-Mata, professor at Florida International University, in her 1987 article, "From Riverside to Little Havana," describes this process. She writes, "Since the scale of the city was different, sometimes the result was the miniaturization of architectural elements that had to be accommodated to a new context. Folk references reached the proportion of myths."<sup>28</sup> The need to create these memorials can be interpreted as an effort by the Cuban exile community to not surrender their conservative ethnic traditions to the turbulent American society of the 1960s. At this time, nostalgia also prompted the Cubans to surround themselves with folkloric symbols of an idealized past era.

A memorial to the victims of the Bay of Pigs Memorial invasion is an outward sign that unified the 1960s Cuban community. The memorial, located at 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue and *Calle Ocho*, honors the memory of the 114 Cubans of the *Brigada 2506* who lost their lives, and the 1,189 others who were captured and imprisoned while attempting to liberate Cuba on April 17<sup>th</sup>, 1961.<sup>29</sup> Juan Clark, former member of *Brigada 2506* and a professor at Miami-Dade Community College, states that the CIA trained the Cuban volunteers of *Brigada 2506* to invade Cuba in an effort to reclaim the island nation. At the last minute, the United States withheld their promised air support, which caused the invasion to fail. As a result, Juan Clark, along with over 1,000 young volunteers, were imprisoned in a Cuban jail for two years.<sup>30</sup> This painful and bitter memory that cannot be forgotten unified the 1960s Cuban community.

The Bay of Pigs Memorial was financed with donations from the Cuban community. Cuban business mainly located on *Calle Ocho* contributed heavily toward the construction fund of this memorial. It was dedicated on April 17<sup>th</sup> 1971. At the opening ceremony, the torch was light by Rebecca Guerra, who lost her father to the invasion when she was an infant.<sup>31</sup> The memorial was designed as a modest marble clad monolithic structure with a permanent burning torch located on a miniscule formal plaza (figure 45, 46). Every time the Cuban community had to protest, celebrated an event such as the past anniversaries of Cuba's Day of Independence on May 20<sup>th</sup>, this memorial was a place where the Cuban community gathered.<sup>32</sup>

The parkway located on 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue existed since 1912, it is a beautiful shaded street with a generous, green median strip and wide sidewalks. In the late 1960s, the City of Miami named it the Cuban Memorial Boulevard and since then has become the site of several mini monuments and small plazas, that commemorate Cuban history and religion. Jose Casanova, City of Miami Planner, re-designed the boulevard in the early 1970s. He recalls the efforts to save the enormous *cieba* tree which sits in the middle of the median. An existing electrical power line, ran through the middle of the boulevard was damaging the upper canopy of the *cieba* tree. In order to save the tree, Casanova urged the City of Miami to request a small electrical easement behind the properties adjacent to the boulevard. The shade of the *cieba* and the other trees planted along its wide sidewalks serve as a comfortable pedestrian walkway for the neighborhood.





Figure 47. Isla de Cuba Memorial.



Figure 48. Nestor Izquierdo Memorial.

The Island of Cuba Memorial was designed by Cuban-American landscape architect, Albert Perez, in 1977. The memorial is located just before the 10<sup>th</sup> street intersection and incorporates a small plaza with marble clad benches, which provides a cool place to rest or for social activity (figure 47). While this memorial invites pedestrian participation, the Nestor Izquierdo Memorial directly to the south the Bay of Pig Memorial (figure 48), is completely fenced-in were pedestrians can only observe as they walk by.<sup>33</sup> Nestor Izquierdo was a Bay of Pigs hero. The sculpture of Nestor Izquierdo was designed by Tony Perez, noted Cuban artist. The Acion Cubana financed his memorial which was installed on August 27<sup>th</sup>, 1992.



Figure 49. Jose Marti/Virgen de La Caridad Memorial.



Figure 50. Monumento a Las Madres.

Directly following Bay of Pigs Memorial, the *Jose Marti/ Virgen de la Caridad* Memorial and the *Monumento a Las Madres* share a brick paved area. According to Dr. Paul George, the *Jose Marti/Virgen de la Caridad* Memorial (figure 49), was originally donated by the Cuban chapter of the Knights of Columbus. The monument commemorates the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Jose Marti. The *Monumento a Las Madres* (figure 50), Dr. Paul George recalls, was a gift from Cuba to the City of Miami in 1957. It was located elsewhere in Little Havana and relocated on the boulevard in the early 1980s. These are two very important icons in the Cuban community. Cuba's greatest author and political leader, Jose Marti organizes the Cuban people to fight for independence against the Spaniards. Most Cubans have a great devotion for Our Lady of Charity or *La Virgen de La Caridad*. Their religious devotion is also tied to the island of Cuba. Participation in these memorials consists of bringing flowers as offerings to both memorials. Flowers are usually brought during Mother's Day or on the anniversary of the death of a loved one.<sup>34</sup>



Figure 51. *Ceiba* tree in the boulevard.

As a backdrop for the *Virgen de la Caridad* Memorial sits an enormous *ceiba* tree (figure 51). This tree has a special significance in the legends of the ancient African-Cuban Religion of *Lucumi* or as it is commonly known “Santeria.”<sup>35</sup> Other Cuban memorials are slowly being planned for the median strip and finding their way toward Coral Way. This boulevard is just one of many outward symbols marking the presence of the Cuban presence in this neighborhood.

Most Cuban exiles wanted to return to their homeland. The Cuban Missile Crisis made many the exiles realize that the return to the island would be impossible. It can therefore be concluded that the memorials were an effort by the exiles not to forget their beloved Cuba, especially by the young generation destined to grow-up in the United States.

## PARK:

### SENIORS ENJOY CALLE OCHO



Figure 52. Domino players in the park.



Figure 53. Chess players compete.

The public park located in the corner of 8<sup>th</sup> Street and 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue is named after a well-loved Cuban historical political hero, Maximo Gomez. Maximo Gomez fought with great courage in the Cuban War of Independence.<sup>36</sup> The small park is a vital meeting spot for Little Havana's retirees. Older residents of the area play animated and sometimes violent dominos, chess and card games while smoking Cuban-style cigars and sipping Cuban coffee (figures 52 and 53). Domino Park as it is informally called, is a focal point on *Calle Ocho* for the older residents as well as for the visiting tourist.

In Cuba it was customary for the older citizens to gather and play dominos. Even before the park existed, older residents played dominos all hours of the day and well into the night on unstable folding tables and sat on milk crates on the large empty lot directly across the Tower Theater. The City of Miami still owns the large empty site on *Calle Ocho*. According to Jose Casanova, in 1976, the City of Miami Parks and Recreation Department along with the support of the Little Havana Kiwanas Club bought the property directly to the east of the Tower Theater with the intention of creating a park to promote this activity.





Figure 54. Domino Park.



Figure 55. Fenced Domino Park.

Originally, the parks design invited participation from the pedestrian on the sidewalk, by the angled position of the pavilions designed to offer the players shelter from the sun and rain while maximizing the number of park participants (figure 54). In the early 1980's, the Mariel Boatlift brought numerous Cubans exiles to South Florida. It was fortunate that numerous Cuban artist reached our shores at this time, however, many exiles were mentally disabled and former prisoners. Castro took the opportunity of this massive exodus to empty his jails and mental institutions.<sup>37</sup> Many vagrants took refuge in South Beach and Little Havana. Unfortunately, the park attracted vagrants and drug dealers presenting a security problem for the elderly participants. In 1986 the local business owners complained about the vagrants and drug dealers present in the park. A year later the park was closed for renovation and the Little Havana Development Authority in an effort to save the park, decided to impose regulations for Domino Park.<sup>38</sup> It was to be only used by seniors 55 years of age or over and each park user would be issued a photo identification. The park was also fenced, many opposed this decision, including Beth Dunlap, architecture critic for The Miami Herald, who expresses her opinion in an article entitled "Don't Fence in Domino Park." The fence does impose a barrier on the pedestrian urban participation (figure 53), but the success of the park is greatly due to the security it provides.<sup>39</sup> In addition a security guard and a park employee are present to check identification cards and assist the seniors.

The central location of the park also plays an important role in its success, this corner site facilitates drop off of seniors, others arriving by car can find ample parking the back of the site. Domino Park is located within walking distance to residential areas directly behind *Calle Ocho*, facilitating pedestrian access of local

residents. The newly opened Tower Movie Theater offers current subtitled movies at a minimum rate of \$1.50. The movie theater (figure 56) offers activity that adds further security to the seniors at the park.



Figure 56. The remodeled Tower Theater next to the park.

The café window of Carlos Café as well as others in the area provide their daily “colada” and Cuban style cigar only a few steps away. According to Dolores Suarez, park manager, at noon many seniors go to the “comedor” where lunches are available for only 50 cents provided by the Latin Quarter Association. After lunch, the seniors then re-join the park for the afternoon games and later return home at 6:00 PM. when the park closes.<sup>40</sup> Domino park provides a safe place where the senior citizens come to socialize and reminisce about times past.

The success of Domino Park is greatly due to sense of safety and security provided for the seniors. The isolation and exclusivity creates a safe environment where the participants can pursue their games. An analogy with the park can be drawn when we examine *Calle Ocho* and its adjacent neighborhood in the early 1960s. The isolation of the numerous Cubans exiles to this area, created a homogeneous environment. In this neighborhood most of the newly arrived Cuban exiles felt safe. Its familiar ambiance somehow felt like a small piece of the old country. This environment served as a spring-board for their future socio-economic success. Immigrant neighborhoods can be considered the core of the United States; a country made up of mostly of immigrants groups.

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## CHAPTER 5:

### CUBAN ETHNIC IDENTITY

"I find this effort to recreate yesterday's Cuba in today's America both heroic and pathetic. Heroic because it tries to rise above history and geography. Pathetic because it is doomed to fail."<sup>1</sup>

\_\_\_\_Gustavo Perez Firmat

Cubans immigrants regardless of when they fled Cuba consider themselves political exiles. This is an important fact that must be considered when examining the evolution of *Calle Ocho*. The collective identity of approximately 300,000 Cuban exiles mostly concentrated in this area was the reason for *Calle Ocho's* strong ethnic identity.<sup>2</sup>

Miguel Gonzalez-Pando former founder of the Cuban Living History Project for Florida International University elaborates on the definition of Cuban political identity. He writes, "That was the identity (political exile) first chosen by the initial exodus upon arriving in the United States, and regardless of contrasting experiences in America or the time that elapsed since then, this definition is consistent with the fact that their shared predicament was irrefutably forced upon them by political events in Cuba: They were clearly 'pushed' out of their homeland. Once so designated, most overtly or intimately remained Cuban political exiles, although no longer exclusively."<sup>3</sup> Many Cubans fled because they feared for their lives, Castro assassinated more than 6,300 during the first year of his regime.<sup>4</sup>

During the timeframe of 1959 to 1973, two immigrant waves reached South Florida. According to Silvia Pedraza sociologist and author, the first wave of Cuban immigrants was composed of several groups. Some Cuban exiles were Batista supporters, socioeconomic upper and middle classes, and others were early

defectors of the Castro regime. These exiles believed that their stay in the United States was to be temporary and short. They hoped to return as soon a Castro's government was overthrown.<sup>5</sup> All hope for returning home was crushed with the Bay of Pigs fiasco, and the arms treaty between President Kennedy and Krushev. From 1965 to 1973, the "Freedom Flights" brought the second massive wave of immigrants. These immigrants were older and mostly women. Consequently, at the end of 1973, approximately half-a-million Cubans were living in the United States.<sup>6</sup>

During this time, the United States was suffering great civil unrest. Many sectors of society were changing; non-traditional values were being introduced into American society, which directly challenged traditional Cuban values. Mercedes Sandoval a cultural anthropologist and Professor at Miami-Dade Community College, explains the circumstances affecting the exiles at this time. She elaborates that, most grandparents in particular, were afraid of loosing their grandchildren to another culture who was in great upheaval. Many Cuban elders strived to conserve Cuban culture; mainly by preserving the Spanish language.<sup>7</sup> English was considered not only a social barrier but also a direct threat isolating them from their grandchildren. Maintaining Cuban culture and Spanish was not difficult because many exiles segregated themselves in the area of Little Havana.

Cuban exiles concentrated in the area of Little Havana. According to Miguel Gonzalez Pando, "Their self-imposed cultural marginality, rather than a weakness, was turned into a source of strength. This could be seen in how they managed to integrate the pursuit of competing economic and socio-cultural needs."<sup>8</sup> This cultural isolation served two important purposes. First, Cubans were able to maintain their language and their cultural identity. This was due to the fact that a great number of exiles with the same homogeneous culture and identity were living in a small concentrated area. The second fact is that they created an isolated market within their own culture.

*Calle Ocho*, was an important commercial street that served the needs of the surrounding Cuban suburbs. Raymond Mohl, professor of history the University of Wisconsin, writes about the Cuban invasion of Little Havana. He states that, "In essence, the first wave of Cuban exile immigration uprooted an entire professional and middle class population from Cuba to Miami. After a short period of adjustment, the entrepreneurial Cubans energetically pursuit economic



opportunity and success in America.”<sup>9</sup> *Calle Ocho* facilitated the growth of the small Cuban businesses. By the end of the 1980s Cubans had achieved high levels positions in cultural and institutional life as well as an economic base of 25,000 businesses.<sup>10</sup>

Cuban exile’s economic success can also be attributed to their familiarity with the American commercial system. Since Cuba’s independence from Spain in 1895, American invested heavily in the island. Rockefeller and Mellon were partners in the United Fruit Company with interest in Banes, Cuba. The Rothschilds owned the American Tobacco Company located in Las Villas, which controlled 90 percent of the tobacco export business in 1901.<sup>11</sup> In 1925 with the Machado presidency, American investment on the island increased even more. Juan Benitez, former vice president of the Crown Trading Companies recalls his family business in 1950 Cuba, “Our family represented the Motorola, Gipsen and Zenith brands of electronic on the island. During the 1960s when Castro confiscated all private property, therefore, we lost all our stores, but we were fortunate to have our contacts in the U.S. Upon arrival to South Florida our family opened an electronic store on *Calle Ocho* and the representatives that serviced our stores in Cuba continued assisting us in the U.S.”<sup>12</sup> This familiarity with the American commercial system made the Cuban struggle for economic success more bearable. Cuban respect for education, tenacity, adaptability and work ethics has made them the first immigrant group to succeed economically within less than a generation. This is virtually unprecedented in the history of large immigrations in the United States.<sup>13</sup> The Cubans have also achieved great political power in Florida. With all their success most Cuban-Americans closely guard their Cuban heritage and continue to consider themselves political exiles.

The Cuban migration is the largest to enter the United States. Most Cuban exiles have concentrated in the area of South Florida. It can be deducted that it is for this reason most Cubans exiles maintain their ethnic identity.



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## CHAPTER 6:

### PROPERTY HISTORY ON *CALLE OCHO*

Several sources were used to compile the histories of the properties on *Calle Ocho*. The Dade County Property Appraisers Office, County Court Records, Polk Index, Nancy Libman's *Calle Ocho Historic Concept and Documentation* prepared for the City of Miami in 1993 as well as numerous sites visits.

The properties studied are from 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue on both sides of the street on *Calle Ocho*. This area is composed of 161 properties on the north and south sides of 8<sup>th</sup> Street. The fluctuation of varied ethnic groups on this street is clearly reflected with the history of the properties. From 1928 to 1956 Jewish sounding names were prominent in the area. Before 1960, Latin sounding names are few, such as Latin Motors from 1958 to 1959 in 1350, Alvarez Brothers Leather Goods from 1957-66 in 1444, Tropical Market from 1953-1954 in 1650 and Gort Photo Studio from 1959 to 1976. In the time-span from 1958 to 1962, 25 percent of the establishments were vacant in this area reflecting the flight of the Jewish community out of the area. From 1962 to 1965 approximately 65 percent of the establishment had Spanish sounding names.

Some establishments have maintained the same use since the early 1930s. The barbershops located in 1530 and 1330 have maintained the same use since 1931. El Oriental Chinese Restaurant has been in operation since 1949.

George Merrick, the developer of Coral Gables had a real estate office in the 1351 building in 1938. The tower theater built in 1929 and the Domino Park reflect two different layers on this historical street.

The history of the properties will assist in the preservation of significant buildings that demonstrate the historic urban layers on Eighth Street. The histories will also indicate establishments with the same use since its initial tenant; Jewish in the 1930s and then Cuban in the 1960s.

# South Even Numbers

## 13<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE:

1302, 04, 30, 34, 36.

BUILT: 1930

OWNER:

TENANTS:

1302

1931 Kraft Barney Grocery  
1931-000 not listed

1304

1933 Goldstein Jacob Grocery  
1934 Juicy Fruit Curb Market  
1935 Indian River Curb Market

1330 \*

1949 Carl & Author Barbers  
1953-60 Eddie's Barber  
1962-74 El Arte Barber  
2000 Barber Shop

1334\*

1937-57 Indian River Fruit and meat Market  
1958-59 Indian River Fruit and Klien-Weiss Meat Market  
1960-70 Destroyed by fire



Figure a. 1304.

1971-00 Los Pinarenos  
1336

1949-53 Curb Lunch  
1956-60 Laundry Basket  
1964-72 El Sitio Restaurant  
1973 Cojimar Restaurant  
1074-76 El Dragon Restaurant  
2000 Los Pinarenos

\* Note: 1330 has been a barbershop since 1949 and 1334 has been a fruit market since 1937.

1340, 44.

BUILT: 1930 addition 1964, 1970.

OWNER: Optica Lopez Inc.

TENANTS:

1340\*

1933-34 Certified Poultry & Egg  
1935-59 Tennessee Poultry Co.  
1960 vacant  
1962-64 OFA Paint & Body  
1966-69 Tropiburger  
1970-00 Optica Lopez

1344

1937 Silver Tower Restaurant  
1940-44 William Electric Contractors  
1945-47 Christie Restaurant  
1949 vacant



Figure b. 1340-44.

Note: The Lopez, A Cuban family, on 8<sup>th</sup> street since 1966 originally in 1603 SW 8<sup>TH</sup> Street, later purchased the 1340-44 building.

**1350,56,58.**

**BUILT: 1949**

**OWNER: Julio V. Arango**

**TENANTS:**

**1350\***

1949-50 BW Motors

1953 Select Motors

1956 Sprawling Motors

1957 Daves Quality Motors

1958-59 Latin Motors

1960 Oscar Motors

1962 Miami Motors

1964 Havana Miami Inc.

1966-73 La Caridad Coffee Shop

**\*Note: Latin Motors in 1958-59 the area must have had Cubans that were fairly wealthy or larger population to support this business.**



Figure c. 1350.

**1356-58**

1970-72 La Canastilla

1976- Farmacia Havana

2000 Karmen Bakery

**1360,62.**

**BUILT: 1953**

**OWNER: Stahls Realty Corp.**

**TENANTS:**

**\*1360**

1953-76 Stahls Meats

1977-93 Casa Sierra

2000 vacant



Figure d. 1360.

**1362**

1953-56 Esquire Deli.

1976 La Caridad Coffee Shop

**\*Note: the owners of the building are still Jewish that owned a Meat Market in 1953-76. This structure has housed a meat market since 1953.**

**1380**

**BUILT: 1941 additions 1957, 1963, 1967**

**OWNER: Francesca and Juan Calvo**

**Trustees**

**TENANTS:**

**1380**

1940 Glen Filling Station

1941 Edward's Filling Station

1953-57 Puritan Dairy 1934

Margaret Allen

1959 Arcorn Cleaners

1960-69 La Plaza Super Market

1970-00 Colon Super Market



Figure e. 1380.

**1388, 90.**

**BUILT: 1925**

**\*OWNER: Bernard Hershkowitz**

**1388**

1937 Arlington Real Estate

1938 vacant

1939 Garnett Barber

1940-41 Frank Turner Baths

1942 vacant

1947-49 Nearly New Antique Shop

2000 Bargain Discount & Coffee Shop

**1390**

1934 Arnold Manufacturing

1935-42 Ace Dry Cleaners

1953-72 Arrow Cash & Carry Cleaners

1993 Calle Ocho Market

2000 Nena's Laundry



Figure f. 1388-90.

**\*Note: Current owner has Jewish ethic sounding name. In 1993 used to be a tourist stop for buses in Calle Ocho. The market attracted tourist from all over the world. Today it is a laundry that looks run down.**



## 14<sup>th</sup> AVENUE:

\*1400,02,08, 10

BUILT: 1985

OWNER: Mc Donald Corp.

TENANTS:

1400

1940 Smith Filling Station Orr Minivan

1941 Brannon Service

1942 Campbell Motor Inn

1947-49 Charles Loss

1949-62 Tower Filling Station

1964-71 Luaces Service Emil Jim

1972 Infante BP

1983 00 Mc Donalds

\*Note: Fast Food restaurants threaten the ethnic environment of the area.

1412,14, 16, 20, 22

BUILT: 1973 vacant lot

OWNER: Latin Quarter Center

TENANTS:

1422

1949 Tower Furniture

1957-59 New Look Breakfast Nook

1960 vacant

1969-72 Casa Capo Furniture

1976 Ulysis Furniture

1983 Vacant lot

1438, 40, 42

BUILT: 1919

OWNER: Aurelio Rodriguez

TENANTS:

1440

1925 Eli Darlow

1926-41 Peter Vanbeck

1933-38 John Clolozoff



Figure g. 1438-24.

1942 vacant

1953-60 Harry Hovsenian

1962 Pedro Aleman

1964-72 Maria Rodriguez

1976 vacant

\*2000 Little Havana to go.

Note: The building is very well renovated. This particular store is newly renovated and well designed.

1442

1940-42 Riverside Laundry

1947 Real Estate

1949-53 Lawrence Fienburg

1956 Central Carpet

1957 Adele Dental Lav.

1959-72 vacant

2000 Carlos Cafe

1444,46,54.

BUILT: 1988 Domino Park

OWNER: City of Miami

TENANTS:

1444

1931-33 Emma Bill

Restaurant

1957-66 Alvarez Brothers

Leather Goods

1962-66 El Goza Bakery

1966-76 Perzsosa Bakery

\*1988-00 Maximo Gomez Park/ Domino Park

\*Note: Domino Park is a focal point for seniors and tourist on *Calle Ocho*.



Figure h. 1444-54.

## 15<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE:

1500, 08

BUILT: 1926

OWNER: City of Miami

TENANTS:



Figure i. 1500-08.

**1500-08**

1929-31 Tower Theater Smith Contractors  
1933-37 Smith Contractors  
1938-39 Landis Contractors  
1940-42 Rodney Contractors  
1957-73 Tower Theater  
1992-00 Tower Theater

**1510, 12, 14, 16, 161/2, 18**

**BUILT: 1926**

**OWNER: Avigdor Landman**

**TENANTS:**

**1510**

1931 Rene Smith Dresses John  
Solomon Filing Station  
1933 vacant  
1934-66 Tower Sundries Drugs  
1967 Los Cubanos de Goya  
1967-00 El Esquisito Restaurant



Figure j. 1510-18.

**Note:** The owner of El Esquisito Restaurant has been in the same location from 1967 to present. In 1990 he opened the Pub Restaurant formally Badias Restaurant. Badias had been Felipe Vall's restaurant from 1965 to 1990.

**1512**

1931-33 Mason & Davenport Real Estate  
1934 Karnes Realty Service  
1935 Earl Coffin Real Estate  
1937-38 Levy Dresses  
1939-49 Jones Dentist  
1953-56 Seymour Chiro.  
1960-62 Bradley Finance  
1964-76 Eagle Finance  
1983-00 Gold Touch Shop

**1514**

1931 Walter Bantz Contractor  
1933 vacant  
1934-37 White Radio Service  
1938 Jack Babroff  
1940 Mullen Electric  
1941-41 Good Housekeeping Electric Equipment  
1947-49 Rae's Dress Shop  
1953 Diehls Women's Wear

1956-57 Kathleen's Inc.

1959-60 vacant

1962-70 Tower Clothes

1993 vacant

**1516**

1937 Benjamin Shannon

1938-40 White Radio Repair

1941-42 Charles B. fine Watch Repair

1947 Pierce Watch Repair

1949 Corner's Gift Shop

1953-66 Trace Jewelers

1967-000 La Milagrosa

**1518**

1931 vacant

1933-34 Cheney Barber

1935 Francis Redmond Decorator

1937 Tower Haberdashery

1938 vacant

1939 Reader Jewel.

1940-42 Marvin Barber

1947-66 Mademoiselle Beauty Salon

1967-72 Vivettes Modas

1976 Caron Beauty Salon

1993 Mirian & Dionisio Beauty Salon

2000 Dionisio Beauty Salon

**1520, 22, 28, 30, 32.**

**BUILT: 1927**

**OWNER: Felipe Valls**

**TENANTS:**

**1520**

1931 Sedon Cleanres

1931 Perfect Cleaners

1934 vacant

1935 Bean & Salad Shop

1937-38 The Dutch Kitchen

1939-41 French Restaurant

1942 Rene's Restaurant

1947 Newton's Hobby Shop

1949-59 Trail Hobby Shop



Figure k. 1520-32.

1962-93 Mi Botica Farmacia  
1999-00 Tintoreria Lucy

1522

1931 Navajo Rugs  
1933 Acacia Flower Shop  
1934-35 Tower Photo  
1937 Max Moss Shoe Repair  
1938-40 Bennett Children Wear  
1942 Summers Music Shop  
1947-62 Kaal Music  
1964-76 Ultra Records  
2000 Martinez \$ Store

1528

1934-42 Bosh Electric  
1947-49 Melrose Electric  
1953-57 Trail Hobby  
1959 London Dress Manuf.  
1960 Alvarez Bros. Hangbags  
1962-64 International Reptiles  
1966-76 Monte Carlo Shoes  
1998-00 Tabqueria Las Villas

1530

1931 Dillard's Barber  
1933-47 Covert Barber  
1953-76 Eighth Street Barber  
2000 Barber Shop

Note: This property has been a barbershop since 1929 to present.

1532

1935 E. Hecker  
1937 Bell Photo.  
1938 vacant  
1939 O'Neil Phy.  
1940-41 vacant  
1941 Mrs. Sprigging  
1947-49 Pruder Nurse  
1953-64 Myrtle Hayes Furn. Rooms  
2000 Latin Quarter Association

1534, 38, 42, 48.

BUILT: 1933

OWNER: Felipe Valls

TENANTS:

1534

1931 Smart Dress Shop  
1933-35 Miami Laundry  
1937-49 White Chiro.  
1956-60 Berkholder Chiro.  
1962 Ross Chiro.  
1964-69 Quiroga Jewelry  
1970-72 Sorrento Jewelry  
1976 Isis Jewelry  
1977-00 Nevada Jewelry

1538

1941 Mary Lou Beauty Salon  
1942-62 Trail Beauty Shop  
1964-66 Maria Antonia Beauty Salon  
1967-72 Caron Beauty Salon

1542

1941-53 Barnetts Juvenile Shop  
1956-57 Tower Juvenile Shop

1959 Trail Happy Shop  
1962-66 Television Center  
1967-72 Badias Dining Room

1548

1931 Patterson Restaurant  
1933 Pat's Lunch Restaurant  
1934 The Keg Saloon  
1937 Miller Brothers Contractors  
1938 Blumenbach Sales  
1939 Trail Press  
1940-41 Glucker & Morrison  
1942 Glucker Cleaners  
1947 Thomas Hart Business  
1964 El Meson Restaurant  
1966-90 Badias Restaurant  
1992-00 El Pub Restaurant

Note Felipe Valls arrived from Cuba in 1960. In 1965 he opened Badias and operated it from 1965 to 1990. Today he owns a chain of restaurants called La Carreta and several other restaurants.



Figure I. 1548.



1600, 02, 04, 06, 08, 10, 12  
 BUILT: 1949  
 \*OWNER: Louis Leibowitz Trustee  
 TENANTS:  
 1600

1931 Killian Soft Drinks  
 1934 Thompson Restaurant  
 1935-37 El Dragon Restaurant  
 1938-39 Dolly Madison Ice Cream

1600  
 1940-49 Puritan Stores  
 1953-60 Factory Outlet Floor Covering  
 1962 vacant  
 1964 Trail Stationary  
 1966 vacant  
 1967 Crown Trading Co.  
 1970-76 Color Sewing Machine Center  
 1993 Guarina Cafeteria  
 \*2000 Diana's Antiques



Figure m. 1600.

1964-67 Refrigerator Center  
 1969-76 El Sol Men's Clothes

1608  
 1953-62 Trail Stationary  
 1964-00 Marina's Beauty Salon

1610  
 1947 Siger Real Estate  
 1949 Southwest Realty  
 1953-59 Miami Art Upholstery  
 1960-62 Trail Shoes  
 1964 vacant  
 1966-71 Maruchi Bakery  
 1972-76 Valdez Fauli Pastry Shop  
 1993 Bodeguita del Medio  
 1999-00 El Buen Savor

1612  
 1953 vacant  
 1956 Dial's Pint  
 1957-66 Jack's Barber Shop  
 1967-76 Eliseo & Nene's Barber Shop  
 1999-00- Nene Barber Shop

Note: The building is owned by ethnic Jewish sounding name. Diana's Gallery is owned by an American part of the new artist migration. The Gort family established their photo studio in *Calle Ocho* in 1959. They have relocated to Coral Gables in 1976.

1602  
 1940-56 vacant  
 1957 International Photo  
 \*1959-76 Gort Photo

1604  
 1953-56 Rainbow Shops  
 1957-64 Snyder Realtor  
 1969-76 Mi Novia Clothes

1606  
 1953-62 European Photo.



Figure n. 1602.

1616, 18  
 BUILT: 1937  
 \*OWNER: Mary & Anne Berk  
 TENANTS:  
 1616

1956-67 Roth Chrome & Iron Works  
 1976 El Canonazo Furniture

1618  
 1938-53 Darmen Auto  
 1956-57 GFC Loan Com.  
 1959-60 Best Industries Typewriters  
 1962-72 Chrome Furniture Showroom

**Note:** The owner has Jewish ethnic sounding name, they own 1616/18, 1620/34, 1638/40, and 1601/11 on 8<sup>th</sup> Street.

**1620, 28, 30, 34.**  
**BUILT:** 1947 additions 1947&78  
**OWNER:** Mary & Anne Berk  
**TENANTS:**  
**1620**  
1937 Darmen Garage Storage  
1938-46 Sam Cline  
1947 vacant  
1953-70 Royal Castle  
1971 Fritas Cubanas  
1976 El Bocadito  
1993-00 Casa Panza Restaurant (1622)

**1630**  
1957 vacant  
1959-62 Mosier & Son Storage

**1634**  
1947  
1953  
1960 vacant  
1969-76 Mario’s Jewelers

**1638, 40.**  
**BUILT:** 1935 additions 1945  
**OWNER:** Anne Berk  
**TENANTS:**

**1638**  
1937-73 Moser & Son Real Estate  
1999-00 Pio V Cigars

**1640**  
1939 Miami Laundry  
1972-73 not listed  
2000 Cigar Manufacturer



Figure o. 1620.



Figure p. 1638-40.

**Note:** There are two cigar manufacturers in this building. One is an American married to a Central American woman who was already in the cigar business. He is an artist from New York. He later moved to Sarasota, he often visited Miami because he found

Sarasota to without cultural variety. This is how he meet his wife and got in the business. The building is completely remodeled .

**1642, 44. 46, 48.**  
**BUILT:** 1946  
**\*OWNER:** Sam Chao & Jean Pac  
**TENANTS:**  
**1642**  
1949-2000 Oriental Restaurant

**1644**  
1933-35 Brown Birds  
1937-42 Shenandoah Bird Shop  
1947 House of Morgan Electric  
1949-60 Atlantic Services  
1962-64 Jose Solis Novelties  
1966 vacant  
1967-69 Ricky’s Floor Covering  
1971 vacant  
1976 Stop Fabric Corp  
1993-00

**1646**  
1948Arno’s Shoes  
1953-59 Trail Shoes  
1960-62 vacant  
1964-76 Chantres Fares  
Cleaners (1648)

**1648**  
1947-53 Center Cleaners  
1993 Star Furniture  
2000 Transouth

**\*Note** 1642 has been a Chinese Restaurant since 1949 and same owners.

**1648**  
1947-53 Center Cleaners  
1993 Star Furniture  
2000-01 Transouth Corp.

**1650, 52. 54.**  
**BUILT:** 1926 /1948 addition  
**OWNER:** Reca Inc.  
**TENANTS:**  
**1650**

1947 Family Finance  
1953 Tropical Market  
1956 Lewis & Son  
1960-64 Glass Palace Frames  
1964-76 U. S. Jewel.  
1993 Surprise Jewel.

**1652**  
1949 Economy Cash & Carry  
1953-56 Sac's Barber  
1959 Hollywood Barber Shop  
1969-71 U.S. Investments & Sales  
1972 U. S. Jewel  
1976 Balmoral Jewel.  
1993 Rosales Jewel.

**1654**  
1948 Daniel Kinder  
1953 vacant  
1956-69 Norman Gadsden Phy.  
1971-76 La Venecia Picture Frames  
1993 vacant

**1668, 72, 74.**  
**BUILT:** 1945  
**OWNER:** Mechoso Store Inc.  
**TENANTS:**  
**1668**

1947 Diamond  
1949 Garnitz Furniture  
1949 E. Mikell  
1953 vacant  
1956 Harles Littlefield  
1959-64 Lawrence  
1966 Miguel Membrado  
1967-71 Rolando Garcia  
1971 Carlos Fojo  
1972 Marian Martin  
1972 Orlando Garcia  
1973-00 Mechoso Store



Figure q. 1688-74.

**1676, 78, 80, 88, 90, 92, 94, 96, 98.**

**BUILT: 1982 (other buildings on site since 1930)**

**OWNER: Grapefruit Corp.**

**TENANTS:**

**1676**

**1935-49 F, N. Holly 5&10 Cent Store**

**1953 vacant**

**1959-62 Sam the China Man**

**1993 Monica**

**1678**

**1953-56 vacant**

**1959-62 Sam the China Man**

**1964-72 G& L Importers**

**1993 vacant**

**1680**

**1933-35 Fashion Dry Cleaners**

**1688**

**1928-35 Piggly Wiggly**

**1690**

**1937-42 Shenandoah Groceries**

**1947 National Delicatessen**

**1949 Trail Inn Restaurant**

**1953-66 Community Finance**

**1967 Interiors Furniture Storage**

**1969 Copa Importers**

**1970-72 vacant**

**1993 Potin Restaurant**

**1692**

**1928 Helmans Cleaners**

**1931-42 Economy Cash& Carry**

**1947-56 Osle Crowder Woman's Furnishings**

**1966 vacant**

**1969-71 vacant**

**1993 Potin Restaurant**

**1694**

**1931 Harvey Contractors**

**1933 vacant**

**1934 Goldstroms Bakery**

**1935 Elizabeth's Shop**

**1938-56 Osle Crowder Woman's Furnishings**

**1957-62 Models Family Apparel**

**1993 Ambar Pyramids**

**1698**

**1928 vacant**

**1929 Otto Bernard Drugs**

**1931-42 Brooks Drugs**

**1947-49 War field's Drug**

**1953-64 Green Drugs**

**1966-72 Havana Drugs**

**1993 Frank Joyeria**

North Odd Numbers

13<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE:

1305  
BUILT: 1949  
OWNER: Sunflag Ltd/1993  
TENANTS:  
1940-Trail Pontiac  
1956- Hudson Trail Motors  
1957- vacant  
1958-1973- Goodyear Service

1321,211/2,23  
BUILT: 1938  
OWNER: Jacob Properties/1999  
TENANTS:  
1321  
1942-49 Gregory Family  
1956 Vera Hecko  
1957-59 Ester de Castillo  
1960 Ruiz  
1962 Padilla  
1973 Milian  
13211/2  
1962 vacant  
1964-69 Lopez  
1970-74 Pancorbo  
1323

1938-41 John Cagey Realtor  
1942 vacant  
1953-62 John Kirton Chiropractor  
1964-76 Merit Trading  
1976-00 Happy Store

1325,27,29, 291/2  
BUILT: 1940  
OWNER: Jacob Properties/1999  
TENANTS:  
1325  
1942 Donald Holland  
1945-47 Robert Power  
1949 William Unke  
1953 Tony Tonias  
1956 Roberto Rodriguez  
1958-60 Nicholas Petropoulos  
1964-66 vacant  
1967 Gloria Gonzalez  
1969-71 vacant  
1972-76 Anolio Suarez  
1976 –00 Happy Store

1327  
1939-42 Margaret Beauty Shop  
1945-67 Hollywood Beauty Shop  
1969-76 Martha Beauty Shop  
1976-00 Manny Unisex

1329  
1940 Sunny Electric Contractors  
1941 vacant  
1942 Clarence Sunlighter  
1945-47 Mrs. Coreen Storm  
1949 Otto Simpson  
1953-59 Carmen Fernandez



Figure r. 1325.



1971-75 Amparo Garcia

1331,33, 35, 41, 411/2  
BUILT: 1956  
OWNER: Villablanca Investments Inc.  
TENANTS:  
1331

1953-66 Star Printing Service  
1967-72 vacant  
1973 Maison Darling  
2000 Antiguedades Cubanas

1333

1957 Jepeway Real Estate  
1958-59 vacant  
1960-61 Tip Top Radio  
1962 vacant  
1964-70 The Children's Store  
1971-00 Meson Darling

1335

1956-57 Allison Albert  
1958-0 Apartments

1341

1942-47 Harry Higgens Air-conditioning  
1953 Amede Gagne  
1956 vacant  
1957-73 Tony and Dick Auto Service



Figure s. 1331.

1343, 47, 49

BUILT: 1924

OWNER: Torres Limited Partners

TENANTS:

1343

1927-29 vacant  
1931 William McGee  
1933 Hannah Bowels  
1934 Margaret Allen  
1935 Reuben Williamson  
1940 George Rock  
1949-69 Ritcher Custom  
Upholstery  
1970- 76 Gonzalez Upholstery  
1976-00 Casa De Los Trucos



Figure t. 1343.

1351, 53, 55

BUILT: 1938

OWNER: Esteban Torres

1351

\*1938 George Merrick Real Estate  
1939 Owen Fuelow Real Estate  
1940 George Rock Plumber  
1957-60 Corbertt Real Estate  
1960-69 vacant  
1969-73 La Commercial Meat Market  
1973 La Complaciente Meat  
1974-76 Blanquita Record

1353

1941-47 Elmer Schwinger  
1953 vacant  
1960-62 Morris Schultmam  
1963-67 Alberto Fuentes  
1969 Vacant  
1970-73 Francisco Perez  
1976 Municipio San Antonio de los Banos

Note: Ben Wolcott, artist specializing in music and jewelry design. He moved his studio and residence from Miami Beach 5 months ago (May 2,000). He lives in an apartment/ studio above the new antique store that also recently moved in. The owner according to Wolcott, is hoping to attract more artist to live in his property.

1355  
1956 Sarval Paints  
1957-62 La Mia Grocery  
1963-69 Toyo Bakery

Note: Mr. Estevan Torres has been in this location for 28 years. Thirty-eight years ago, he escaped Cuba in a 14-foot boat. His business La Casa de Los Trucos, is the same as his family had in Cuba since 1934 located at Bernardo #115 in El Vedado back in Cuba. 1351 was the location of George Merrick’s Real Estate office in 1938, during the development of Coral Gables.

1357,59,61  
BUILT: 1938  
OWNER: American Oil Co.  
TENANTS:  
1357  
1938-39 Frank Raymond  
1940 Orr MacNiven  
1941 Kieth Crosby  
1942 Vincent Nolan  
1947-49 Charles Loss  
1949 Alberta Folsom  
1953-56 Emil Jum  
1957 vacant  
1959-60 Leonard Bendara  
1960-62 Ethel Sullivan  
1964 Eugenio Gonzalez  
1966 John Okelley  
1967 Juan Nunez  
1969 Jose Portela  
Listings end at this year

1359  
1942-47 Paterno Sylvan Upholstery  
1953 Dade Federal Saving Association  
Trail Recreational Pool Parlor  
1957 vacant  
1960 Pan Am Electronics

1962 vacant  
1964-69 Harry Dry Goods  
Listings end at this year  
1361  
1941 Jason McCaffrey  
1942 vacant  
Listings end at this year

1377  
BUILT: 1927/ 1966 addition  
OWNER: F.G.Giel Truss  
TENANTS:  
1377  
1927-29 Andrew Cowgill Filling Station  
1930-41 Southwest Service Station  
1942 Cowgill Service Station  
1947 Culpepper Service Station  
1949-57 Brooks Service Station  
1959-62 Cimo American Service Station  
1967-69 Quimo American Service Station  
1970 vacant  
1970 Perez American Service Station  
1973 Piedra American Service Station  
2000 Amoco

14<sup>th</sup> AVENUE:

1401  
\*BUILT: 1928  
OWNER: Tamiami Methodist  
TENANTS:  
1928-00Tamiami Methodist Church  
Note: Originally built in 1928 and has always been The Tamiami Methodist Church.



Figure u. 1401.

1419  
 BUILT: 1938  
 OWNER: Marcus M, Ruiz  
 TENANTS:  
 1937-39 Thriftmart Grocery  
 1940-42 Shells Grocery  
 1949-67 Syvan Paterno  
 1969-76 Muiblicenter Furniture  
 1980 Almacenes Pepe & Berta

1421,23,25,27  
 BUILT: 1968  
 OWNER: Murray Rozynes  
 TENANTS:  
 1421  
 1971-72 Rosan Shoe and Fashion  
 1973 General Finance Corporation  
 Scorpion & Perez Insurance Agency  
 Carlin & Torres Realty  
 Artect Business College

1423, 25, 27  
 2000 vacant lots

1443,53, 61, 67, 69  
 BUILT: 1979  
 OWNER: City of Miami  
 TENANTS:  
 1443

1976 Musicland Musical Instruments

1453  
 1937-41 Mammoth Food Stores and Cushmam Bakery  
 1947-49 Margaret Ann Market  
 1953 Home Furniture  
 1956-60 Soul Music Jukebox Co.  
 1964-76 Occidental Electric

1467  
 1929 Peoples Poultry and Egg Farm

1469  
 1929 George F. Fruits

1475

BUILT: VACANT LOT  
 OWNER: City of Miami

TENANTS:  
 1937-39 John Solomon Filing Station  
 1940 Sheldon's Filling Station  
 1941-42 Walters Service Station  
 1947-57 AP Shell  
 Souza Service Station  
 1970 vacant  
 1971-72 Cruz-Pino Motors  
 1976 El Progreso Mechanic and Tire



Figure v. 1475.

## 15<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE:

1501, 03. 05, 07, 13  
 BUILT: 1926  
 OWNER: Alexis Jepeway  
 TENANTS:

1501, 1502, 1503  
 1933 Edward Mason Milk  
 Distributor  
 1934-38 Puritan Dairy Store  
 1939-40 Al E. Restaurant  
 1949-56 Tower Restaurant  
 1957-59 Mozzee's Restaurant  
 1960 vacant  
 1962-64 Givoria Catering  
 1966 vacant  
 1967-72 National Drugs  
 1976 Clinica La Fe



Figure w. 1501.



1505 1977-00 Futurama  
 \*2000 Little Havana Funeral Home.  
 1925 Shenandoah Service Ice Station  
 1941-47 Alfonso Burke Restaurant  
 1977-00 Futurama

1507 1938 Earl Coffin  
 1939-40 Farrell M. Tittsworth Real Estate  
 1941-42 White Radio Service  
 1947-56 Tower Radio Repair  
 1957-60 vacant  
 1962-69 Kitty's Apron Shop  
 1970-72 vacant  
 1973 not listed

1513 1935-41 Ball & Chain Saloon  
 1960-66 Copa Lounge  
 1967-00 Futurama

**Note:** The seniors in Domino Park were very upset because the funeral home occupied the establishment across the street. They tried to stop it, but it was approved by the city.

1521, 25  
 BUILT: 1938  
 OWNER: JDC Corp. /1990  
 TENANTS:  
 1521 1927 Morris Zohn  
 1937 Mrs. Rose Baker Knit Goods  
 1938-42 Ber-Mel Knit Shop  
 1947-49 Blumenbach Sales Electronics  
 1953-59 Kesslers Radio and Television  
 1960 Tower Furniture  
 1962 Lamps by the Thousands  
 1964 Fast Appliance Service  
 1969 Tommy's Fashion  
 1971-76 Latin American Collection  
 1966-00 Dukanee Beauty Supply

1523

1937 Tower China Shop  
 1938 Pangle Kodak  
 1939-40 Lamac Shoe Repair  
 1941-42 La-Mac Shoe Rebuilders  
 1949 Ernie's Expert Shoe Repairing  
 1953-56 Mac's Paint  
 1957-62 Puritan Ice Cream  
 1964-1976 El Pescador Fish Market  
 2000 vacant

1525 1937 Trapnell Drug  
 1940 vacant  
 1941-42 Farris Ice Cream  
 1947-56 Jaffee Ice Cream  
 1957-62 Mac Paint & Hardware  
 1964-66 El Canado Hardware  
 1967 Special Hardware  
 1969-76 Dukanee Beauty / Barber Shop

1529, 35  
 BUILT: 1946  
 OWNER: W.J. James Truss  
 TENANTS:  
 1529 1953 Nelson's Laundry  
 1956-67 Thorton's Laundry  
 1969-76 Joyeria Milies  
 1976 El Pescador Restaurant  
 2000 Pizza Hut

1527 1949 Factory Outlet Floor Covering Corp.  
 1966-76 Ernie's Shoe Repair  
 2000 Pizza Hut

**1543, 45**  
**BUILT: 1956**  
**OWNER: Roberto Daniel/1981**  
**TENANTS:**  
**1543**  
    **1957-62 International Sales Corp.**  
    **1964-72 Findlay Clinic Lav.**  
**1545**  
    **1957-62 Sandborn Co. Medical Supply**  
    **1970 vacant**  
    **2000 El Pescador Seafood**

**1959 Bargains in Books**  
**1960 vacant**  
**1962-64 Tropical Grocery**  
**1966-76 Hurricane Printing**

**1551,53, 55, 57, 59, 63, 65**  
**BUILT: 1925**  
**OWNER: JDC Corp. /1990**  
**TENANTS:**  
**1551**  
    **1931 Hyman Mechlowitz**  
    **1933-38 Everglades Grocery**  
    **1939 Hardy Dunn Grocer**  
    **1941 John Skelton Bakers**  
    **1942 Walter Stoffer Baker**  
    **1947 Kappy's Fine Foods**  
    **1953-57 Murry's Delicatessen**  
    **1959 Malboro Restaurant**  
    **1960-62 Wolf's Industrial Catering**  
    **1966-60 Tropical Grocery**  
    **1970-76 Las Brisas Super Market**  
    **1976 Orialda Frenandez**  
**1553**  
    **1938 Makar Olsey Tailor**  
    **1939 vacant**  
    **1940 Frank Athansaw Billiards**  
    **1947-50\9 United Kosher Meats**  
**1555**  
    **1928 New Washington Market**  
    **1929 vacant**  
    **1947 Electronic & Sound Services**  
    **1949-57 Ryan Radio**

1565, 67, 69, 75  
BUILT: 1984  
OWNER: Toddrick Inc.  
Seventh Dunkin Donuts Realty Inc.  
TENANTS:  
1565  
Parking Lot  
1933-38 Mortimore J. Shaw Gas Station  
1938 Charles Caruso Iron Works  
1939 vacant  
1940-42 Wendel Filling Station  
1947 George Nemetz Filling Station  
1949-53 Shenendoah Service Station  
1956-64 Blue Bar Service Station  
1966-76 Star Service  
1993- Dunkin Donuts  
2000 vacant



Figure x. 1565.

16<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE:

1601, 03, 05, 07, 09, 11  
BUILT: 1938  
OWNER: H.A. Berk  
TENANTS:  
1601  
1933-35 New Washington Market  
1937 National Package Stores Liquors  
1940-62 Knights Package  
1966-69 Shell City Liquors  
1970-76 Rey Joyeria  
1603  
1937 Joseph Kadar Shoe Repair  
1938 George Sprinkle Shoe Repair  
1939 vacant  
1940-41 John Sacker Exterminator  
1942 vacant  
1947 Gordon Carlile Real Estate  
1953 Air Way  
1956 Fordyce Electronics  
1957 Gamble Enterprises (1603-07)  
1960 vacant  
1962 International Electric  
1966-70 Lopez Optica  
1972-73 Manuel Duval Phy.  
1605  
1957-60 European Photo  
1962-73 Orlando Fine Furn.  
1607  
1956-60 Not listed  
1960-70 vacant  
1972-74 Optica Cubana  
1609  
1957-73 Welch Apts.  
1611  
1957 vacant  
1960 Hurd /Thelma Manuf.  
1962-66 vacant

**1967-73 Andres Bruzor**

**1613, 15, 35, 37, 39**

**BUILT: 1978**

**OWNER: Jose Guevara**

**TENANTS:**

**1613**

**Vacant lot**

**1615**

**1953 Air Way**

**1956-64 Rahal Sons, Inc.**

**1966-70 Arabic Grocery**

**1970-76 Vel- Mart Equipment**

**2000 Espana Importers**

**1637**

**1957-62 Western Auto**

**1966-73 Chrome & Iron Works**

**1639**

**1937-41 Brownie Keep-Fit Bowling Alley**

**1942 vacant**

**1957-37 not listed**

**1641**

**BUILT: 1958**

**OWNER: Sher Enterprizes/1976**

**TENANTS:**

**1641**

**1949 AAA Manufacturers**

**Used Cars**

**1953 vacant**

**1957 not listed**

**1960 Moser & Son**

**1962 Security Real Estate**

**1964-72 Barkins Construction**

**1973-76 Security Real Estate**

**1993 Beepers**

**2000 Tabaqueria Popular**



**Figure y. 1613-39.**



**Figure z. 1641.**

**1643, 45, 47, 51, 53**

**BUILT: 1930**

**OWNER: D. Higginbotham**

**TENANTS:**

**1643**

**1957-73 National Brand Tires**

**1651**

**U. S. Jewelry**

**1695, 99**

**BUILT: 1988**

**OWNER: Floval Oil Com.**

**TENANTS:**

**1699**

**1957 Joe & Irv Serv. Station**

**1960-62 Joe Pure Oil Serv. Station**

**1966-67 Trail Pure Station**

**1969 A A A Auto**

**1970-72 Pedro Pure Oil Station**

**1973 Pedro Union Station**

## CHAPTER 7:

### ***CALLE OCHO REVIVED:***

#### **Proposed Artist Studios designed using Cuban Ethnic Elements produced during 1960-1973.**

Urban streets are in a constant dynamic change in a cycle of life and death. This constant cycle is typical of American urban streets particularly in immigrant cities. After a long cycle of decline there seems to be a glimmer of hope for Eighth Street in the form of Artists who are migrating into this area.

The artists as many other groups before them are finding new opportunities on Eighth Street. They are abandoning the area of South Beach due to their high rents caused by the area's up-swing cycle. Artists find Eighth Street attractive because of its economic rents, small-scale urban life and its ethnic flavor.

In a similar fashion, the first massive wave of 1960 Cubans arriving in South Florida found Eighth Street to be the most desirable location to settle. In 1960 the area of Eighth Street was suffering a cycle of decline. This cycle was due to the economic success of the Jewish community that occupied the area since the late 1920s. Most of the Cuban refugees at that time were businessmen. The Cuban businessmen found the small-scale commercial buildings along Eighth Street largely constructed by the previous Jewish businessmen, ideal for their new start. The Cubans created a cycle of life for Eighth Street and introduced ethnic urban elements, which are still present in this area and in South Florida.

The blending present in the transitional cycles of life and death of urban streets is incorporated into the design of the artists' studios. Ethnic Cuban elements produced on *Calle Ocho* are used in the design of the artist's studios. Urban elements such as adaptability, isolation, pedestrian interaction and productivity were incorporated into the designs of the artist's studios.

The proposed artist studios were also designed as an adoptive re-use of existing buildings along the street. Minimum architectural intervention makes the studios economically feasible. The small intervention also assist in maintaining the urban quality of the area. Many of the buildings on this street have remained virtually intact except for the functional adaptations by their tenants in order to attain a viable economic situation.



Figure57.

The sculpture shown on the left represents the life cycles of Eighth Street. Three 8" cubes represent the stages of growth on Eighth Street. The lower cube represents the pioneer stage that eventually sealed the fate of this area. The pioneers sold their large plots of land and the land was re-plotted into small-scale lots making the area economical. The middle cube represents the cycle of the Jewish community. The top cube represents the Cuban settlement in the area. Transparent plexi-glass planes divide the stages to communicate the blending of the slow transitions between the urban cycles.



SITE ANALYSIS



Figure 58.

Most buildings along Eighth Street have little Architectural historical significance with the exception of the Tower Theater. Some structures have minor architectural motives typical of the mid-1920s. It is interesting to note that some buildings have served the same function since the day they were first occupied.



Figure 59.

As can be seen by the analysis, the Jewish community occupying Eighth Street flourished in the 1930s. Numerous buildings were constructed at this time, creating a small-scale commercial artery. These buildings were then occupied by the 1960 Cuban migration.





Figure 60.

Approximately 10,000 Cubans were already established in the area of Eighth Street by late 1959. The analysis indicates the Cuban businesses on this street before the massive immigration starting in 1960.



Figure 61.

Most Cubans entering South Florida in 1960 settled in the area of Eighth Street. In less than a generation many Cuban refugees had achieved economic success. The numerous ethnic shops catered to the 300,000 Cuban exiles that lived in the adjacent area.





Figure 62.

Still today many business along Eighth Street remain Cuban owned. The numerous influxes of Cubans in the 1960s and 1970s left a strong ethnic hold on this area. The Latin influence attracted many Central Americans to this area.



Figure 63.

Cubans created monuments along 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue also known as The Cuban Memorial Boulevard. Monuments are still being planned along this shaded boulevard. Maximo Gomez Park on 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue and *Calle Ocho* offer a safe place for senior citizens.





Figure 64.

Artists are currently occupying several areas along Eighth Street. They have also brought with them antique shops and galleries. The proposed artist studios sites were selected based on the proximity of existing artist studios and galleries along Eighth Street

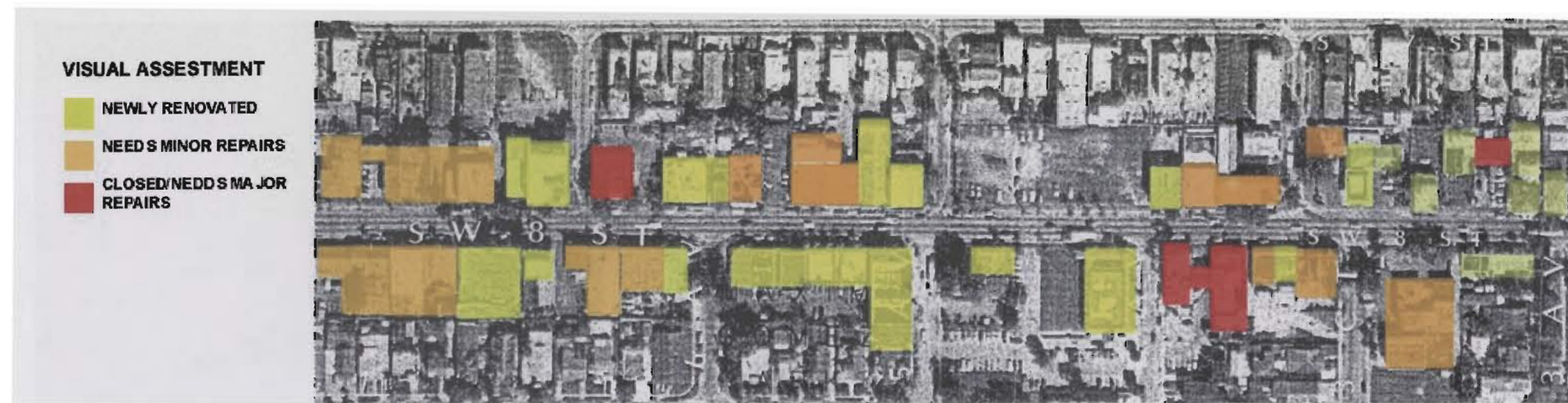


Figure 65.

The sites for the proposed artist studios were also selected based on the visual assessment of the street. In an effort to renovate the street, sites were selected based on the areas that needed the most repairs.



Figure 66.

Three sites were chosen for the proposed artist studios. Site 1 is located on the corner of 16<sup>th</sup> avenue, the former Dunkin Donut. Site 2 is located on Eighth Street and 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Nena's Laundry and the Colon Supermarket. Site 3 is located on 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue currently an auto repair shop.



## SITE 1: 1565, 67, 69, 75 S.W. 8<sup>TH</sup> STREET

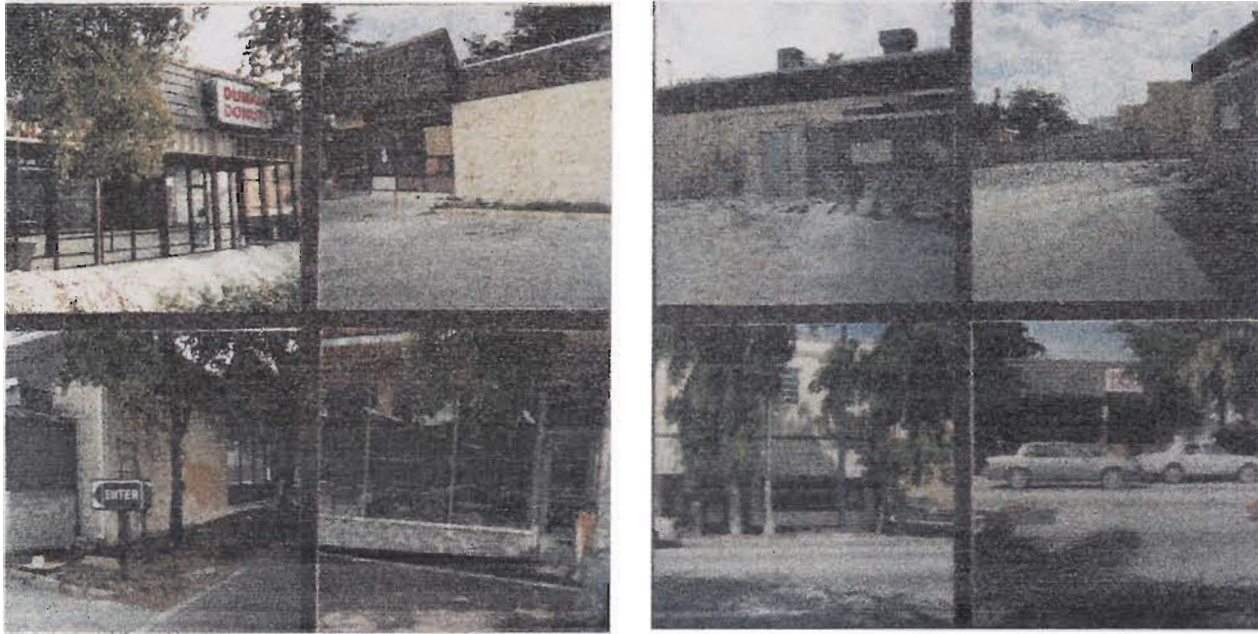


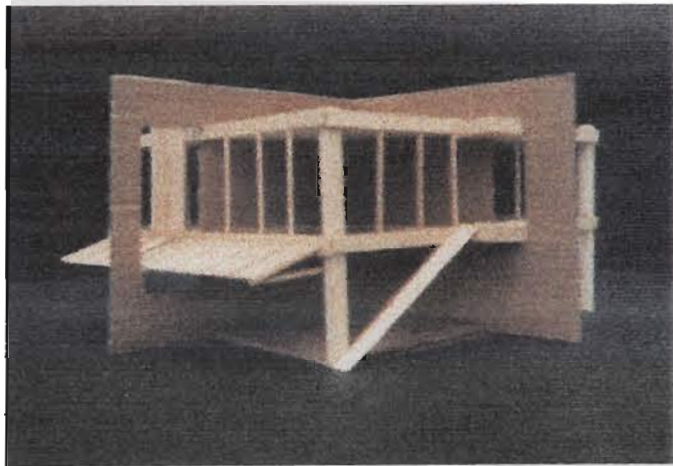
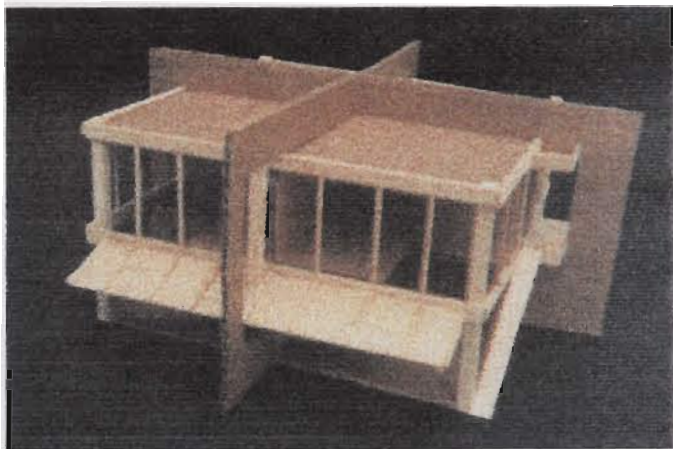
Figure 67. Site Photographs.

The site is located on the North edge of Eighth Street on the corner of 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Built in 1984, the former Dunkin Donut shop has been vacant from 1999 to 2001. From 1940 to 1984 the site contained a gas station.

The present structure is a typical Dunkin Donut franchise structure. The building is 40' wide along Eighth Street by x 42' deep into the lot. It sits on the southwest section of the lot. The lot is 120' along Eighth Street by 150' deep. The building is 15' high.

Several factors made this site ideal for the proposed artist's studios. The building was abandoned and an eyesore. It was also adjacent to artist's activities on its west. The proximity of the existing building to the sidewalks was a favorable factor. Another advantage is the ample lot, this enabled outside work areas and parking. The building's height of 15' provided the volume desired in the artist's studios.

SITE1: PROCESS



Cuban Ethnic elements of flexibility, pedestrian interaction and production were incorporated into the design of the artist's studios on this site. The organizational element of the grid was also incorporated as a gesture that recalls the structure of the plotted lots along Eighth Street.

Originally the proposal was to demolish the existing structure. The proposed building was to be erected in the same location and maintain the dimension of the former Dunkin Donut building. The two large planar grids served as structure and organized the interior space into four studio apartments. Each studio/apartment was composed of a 2-story unit. The top of the L-shaped floor was a small studio apartment. The bottom was a two-story artist's workspace and a gallery. Pedestrian interaction was encouraged by the exhibit area provided in the south and north side of the structure and the openness of the studios to the sidewalk. This solution was abandoned because it was more economical to maintain the original structure.

Figure 68 & 69. Preliminary Model.

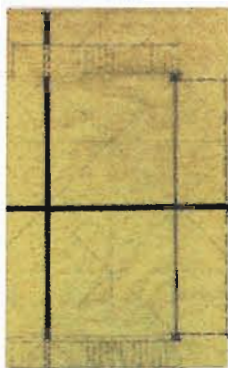


Figure 70. Preliminary Plan.

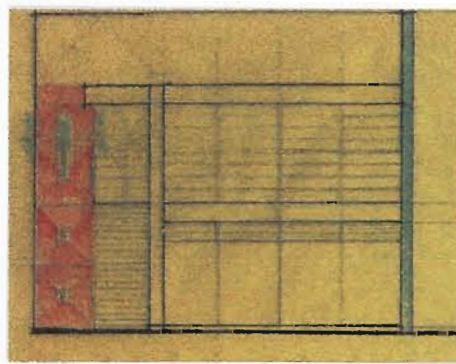


Figure 71. South Elevation.

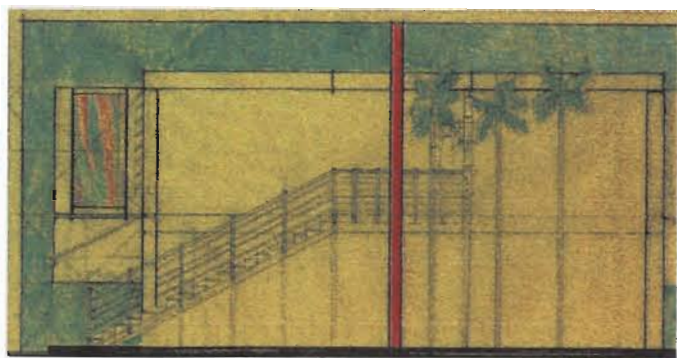
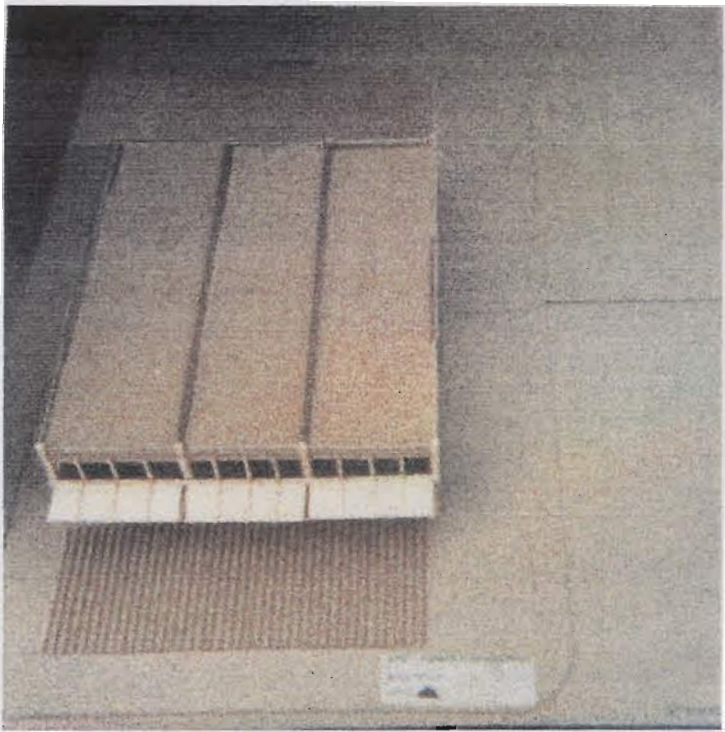


Figure 72. West Elevation.



# SITE1: PROPOSED DESIGN SOLUTION



Site1 final solution incorporated the following Cuban elements:

- \*Strong relationship to the street
- \*Production
- \*Isolation
- \*Flexibility

Figure 74. Model of Proposed solution.

## Strong relationship to the Street :

The building's location on the site fosters a strong relationship to the street as can be seen in the site plan. This relationship is emphasized by the 6' overhang that protects the pedestrians. Also the exterior gallery area located next to the sidewalk along Eighth Street encourages pedestrian participation.

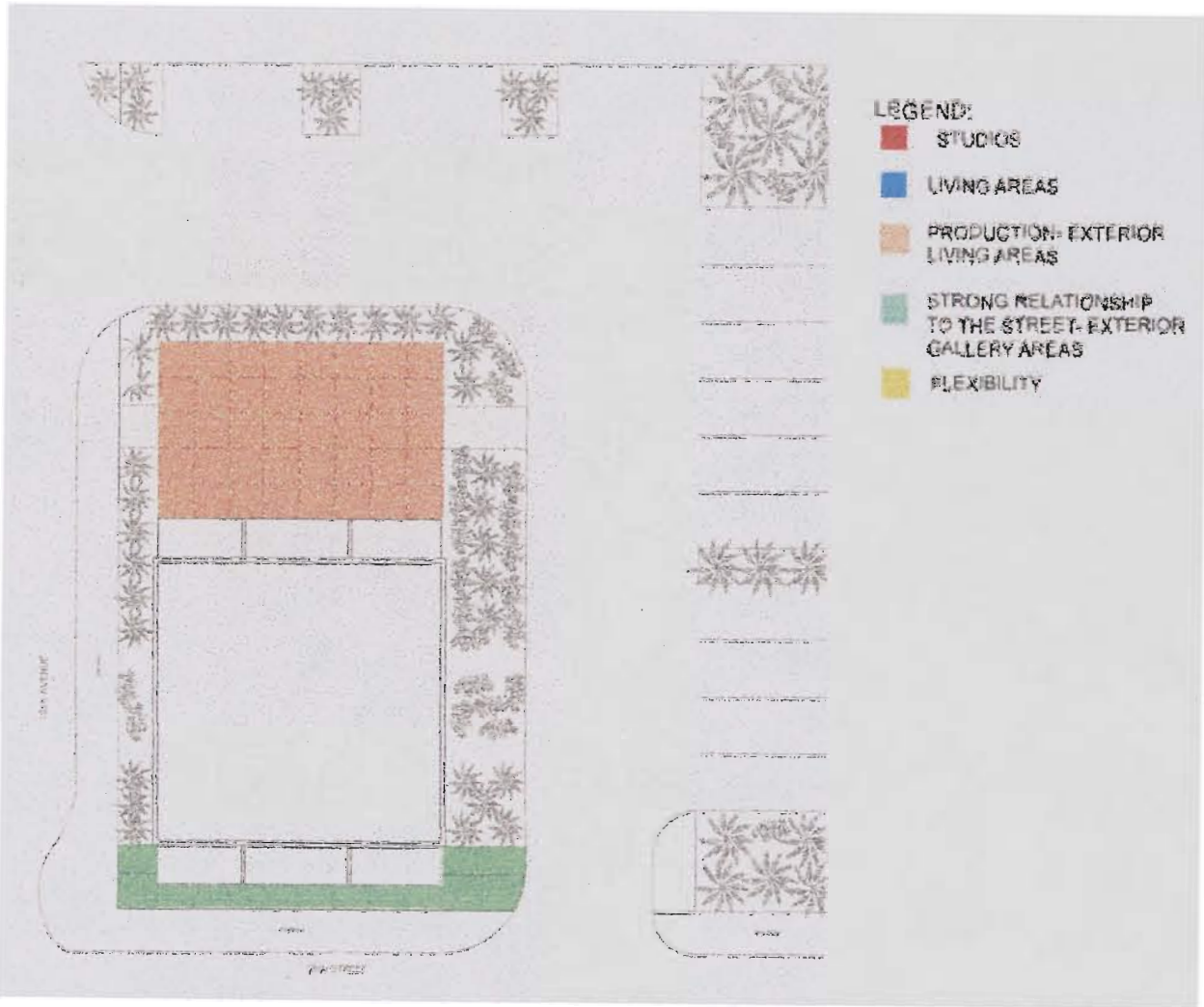


Figure 75. Site Plan

Production:

Similar to the manufacturing of tobacco as seen by pedestrians as they walk along the sidewalks of *Calle Ocho*, the artist produce their work in the exterior studio area provided on the south side of the site. The exterior studio is partially screened and shaded by heavy landscaping. Pedestrians can see glimpses of the artist at work.

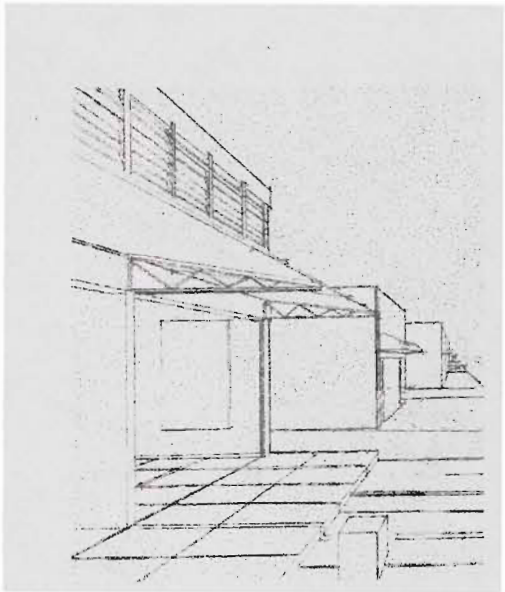


Figure 76. South Facade.

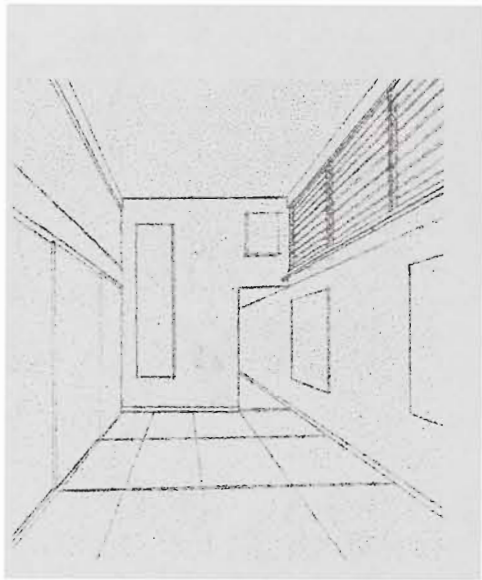


Figure 77. Interior Gallery.

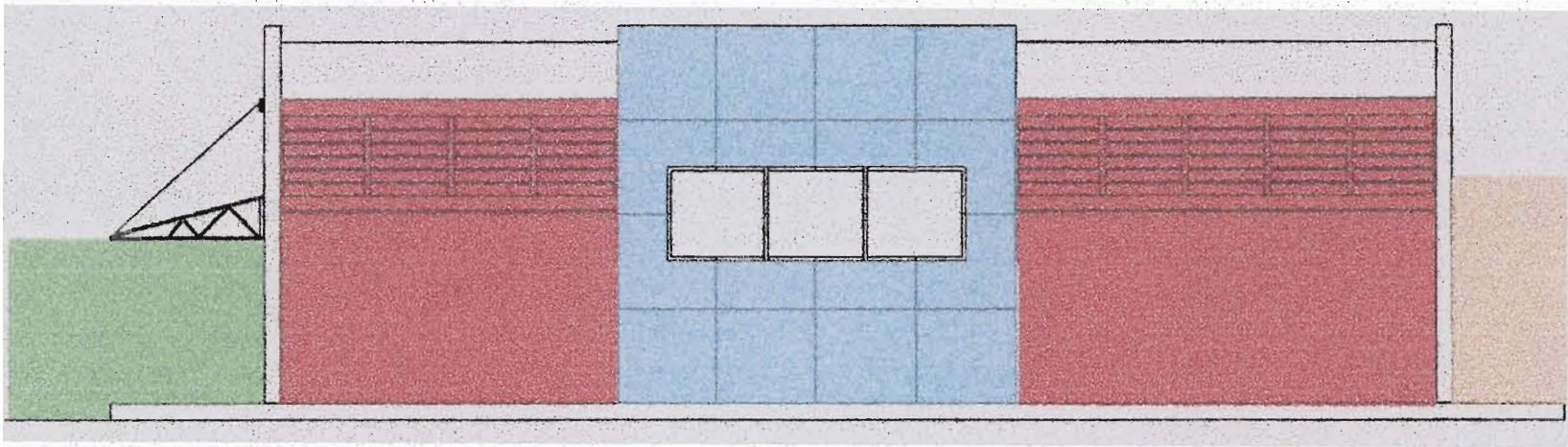


Figure 78. East Elevation.



Flexibility:

Artists are offered the flexibility of renting individual units or the total building. The studios may be completely opened to be used as a large working area/gallery. Operable sliding panels between the units facilitate this adaptability.

Isolation:

As sense of isolation is provided by elevating the living area as seen in the second floor plan and section located on the far right. This change in elevation provides the opportunity for ample storage. Privacy for the living area is achieved by entering from the north side opposite the Eighth Street facade.

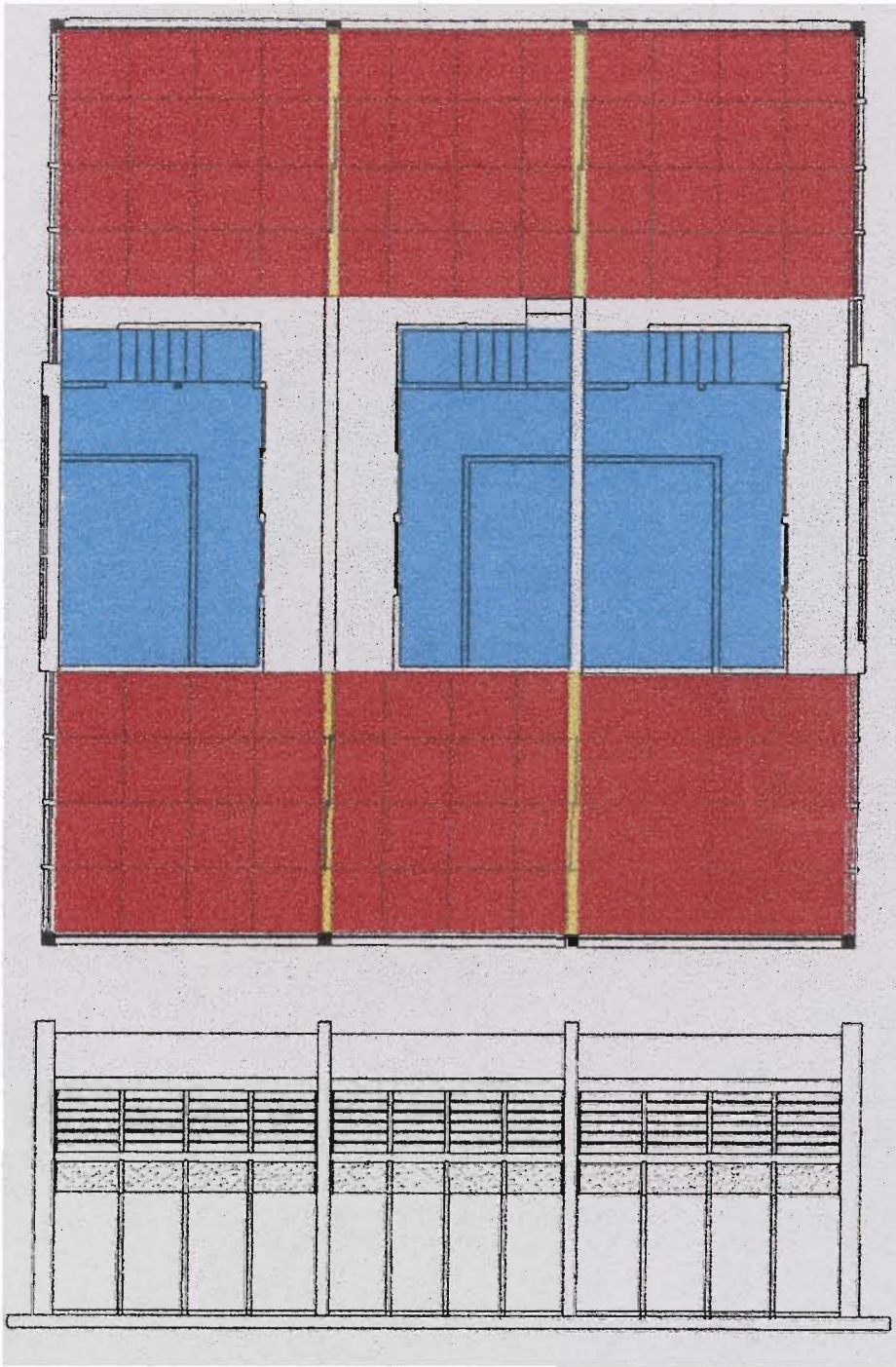


Figure 79 & 80. First Floor Plan above, South Elevation below.

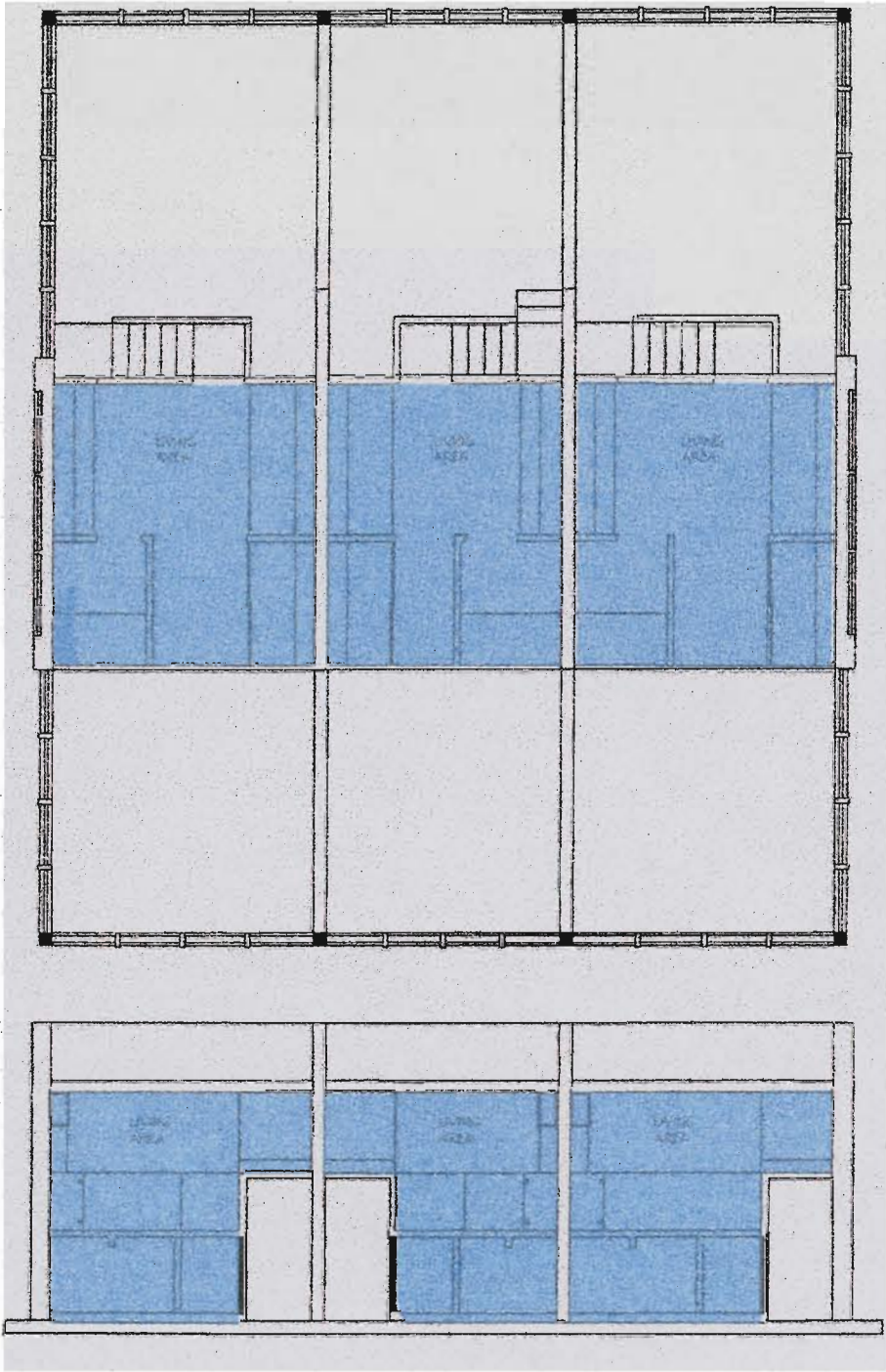


Figure 81 & 82. Second Floor Plan above, Section below.



## SITE 2: 1380, 1388 & 90 S.W. 8<sup>TH</sup> STREET

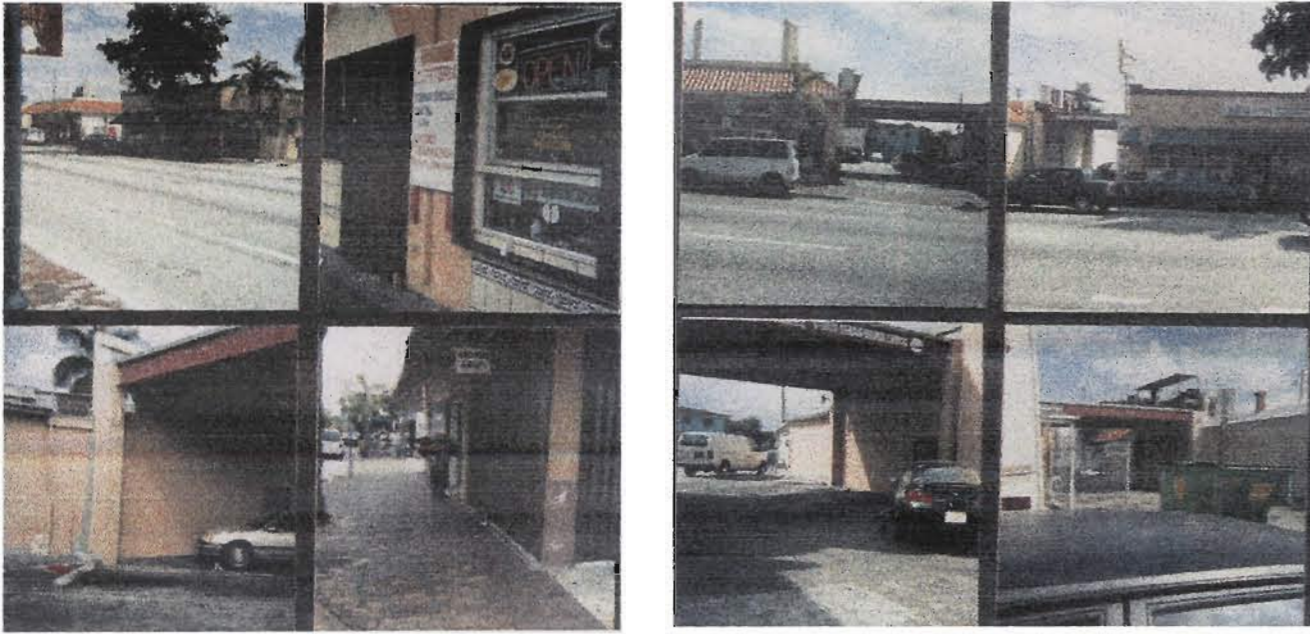


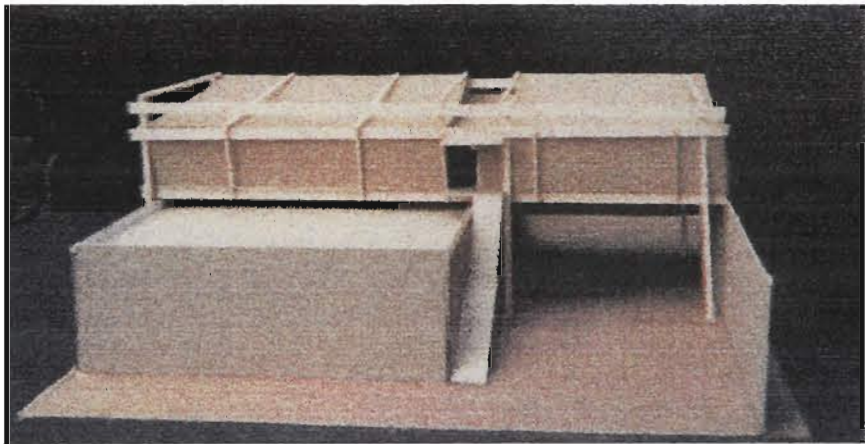
Figure 83. Site Photos.

Site 2 is located on the south edge of Eighth Street on the corner of 14<sup>th</sup> avenue. It is the existing steel bridge between the 1380 and the 1388-90 buildings. The bridge belongs to the 1380 property which has been occupied by the Colon Supermarket since 1970. The steel bridge was the original roof overhang for Glen's Filling Station built in 1940. The structure remained a gas station until 1953. At this time the use of the property changed from a gas station to a dairy from 1953 to 1957 and later grocery stores. The 1388-90 property was originally built in 1925. It has supported commercial uses such as real estate, dry cleaners and groceries.

The dimensions of the existing structure are 31' wide on its east-west direction and 27' in its north-south direction.

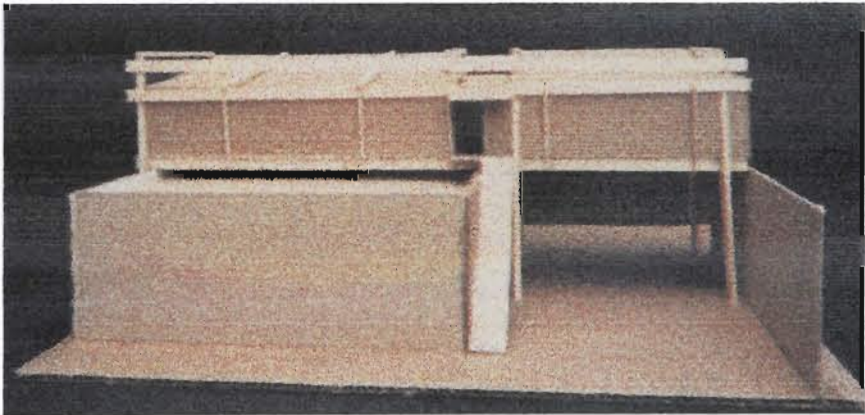
This site was selected because the 1380 and 1388-90 properties needed major repairs. It also offers an opportunity to create an isolated structure without disturbing the adjacent buildings.

SITE 2: PROCESS



The Cuban ethnic elements incorporated into the solution of site 2 were flexibility and isolation.

Two artist’s studios and apartments were designed on this site. One unit was to be located directly on the existing steel bridge and the other unit was to span across the 1388-90 building. The structure was designed to be of very light materials such as steel and glass. This was to serve as a contrast to the existing buildings.



The design solution was abandoned because it was a very large intervention into the urban environment. The design solution was also not feasible due to the fact that the proposed structure crossed over the property lines.

Figure 84 & 85. Preliminary Models.

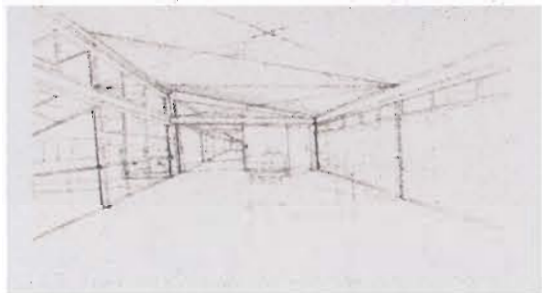


Figure 86. Interior Perspective.

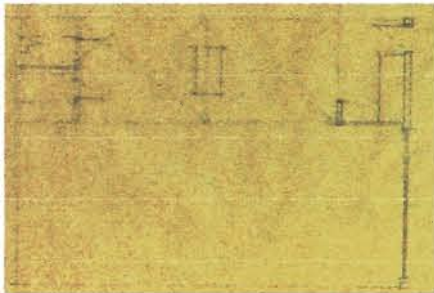


Figure 87. Preliminary Plan.

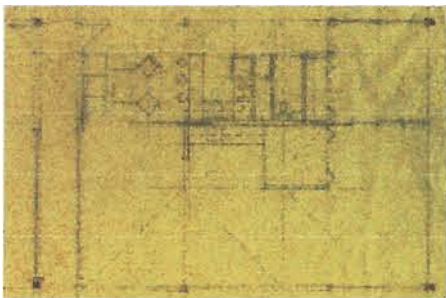


Figure. 88. Preliminary Plan.

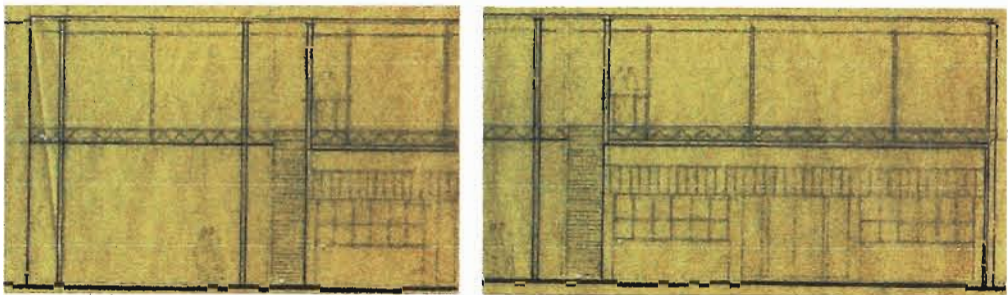


Figure 89 &90. Preliminary Elevations.



## SITE 2: PROPOSED DESIGN SOLUTION

Site 2 incorporated the following Cuban ethnic elements into the design concept:

\* Isolation

\* Flexibility

Isolation:

The design concept for this site incorporates the importance of isolation as a major factor contributing to the Cuban economic success. Two artists studios are located on the overhead bridge between the existing buildings. The new structure imposes minimum interference to the overall urban environment.

Figure 93. Site Plan

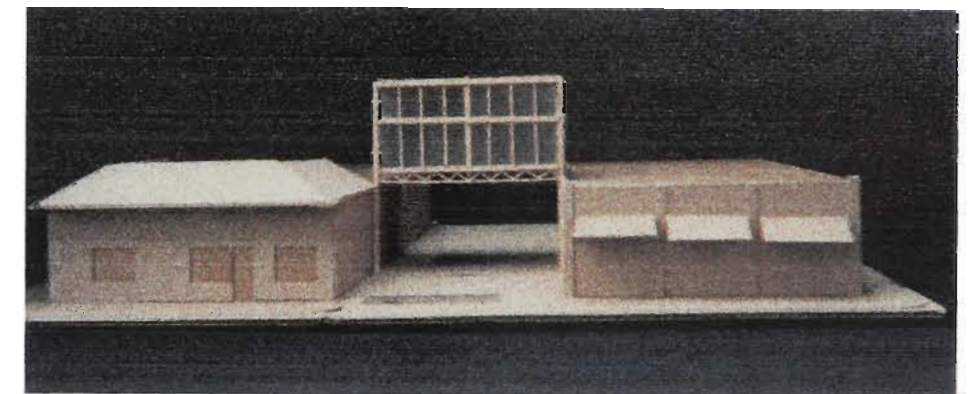
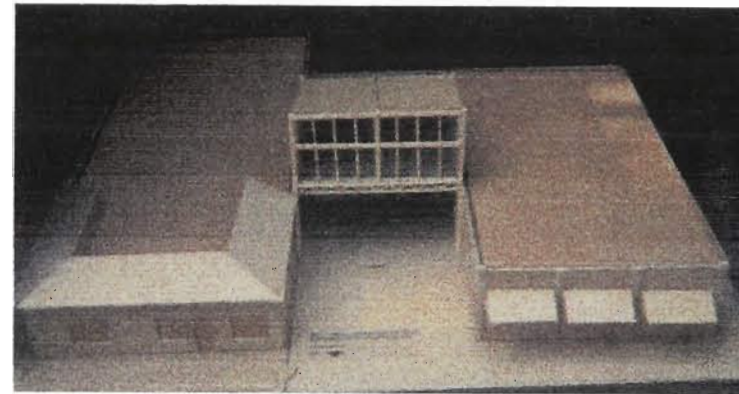
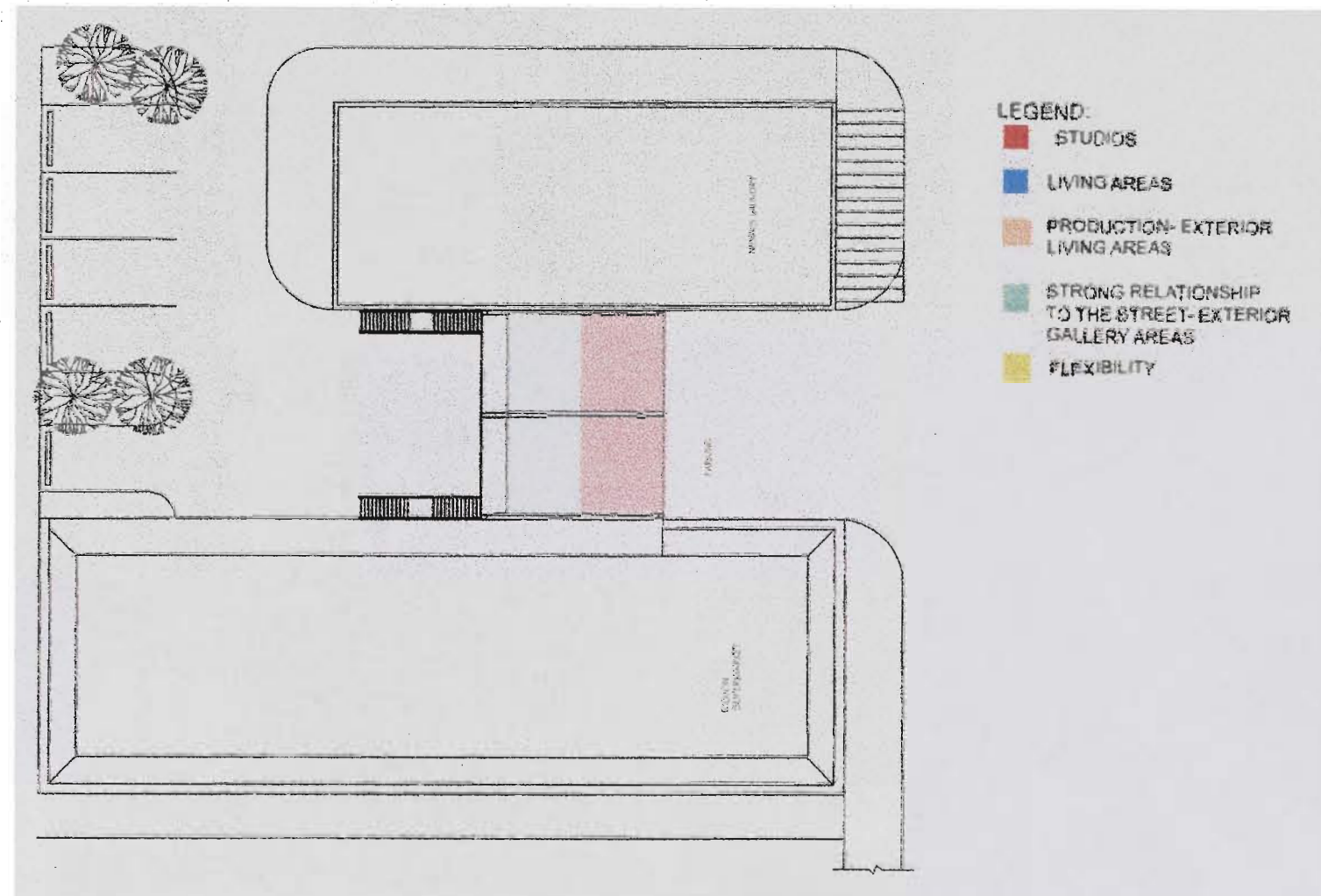


Figure 91& 92. Models.



Flexibility:

The adaptability and flexibility of the Cuban exiles proved to be assets to their survival in their new country. These qualities have been incorporated into the design solution: The folding panels high-lighted in yellow in the floor plan can be used to divide the floor area into two units, in order to allow more than one artist to work within the same space. This flexibility permits the space to be adapted either into one large unit or two individual units by maintaining the sliding panels in their closed position.

Figure 94. Floor Plan

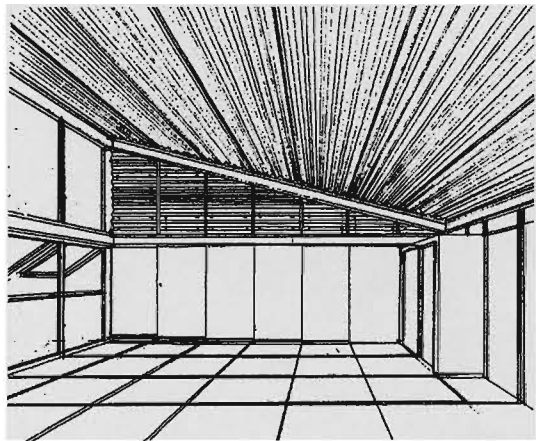
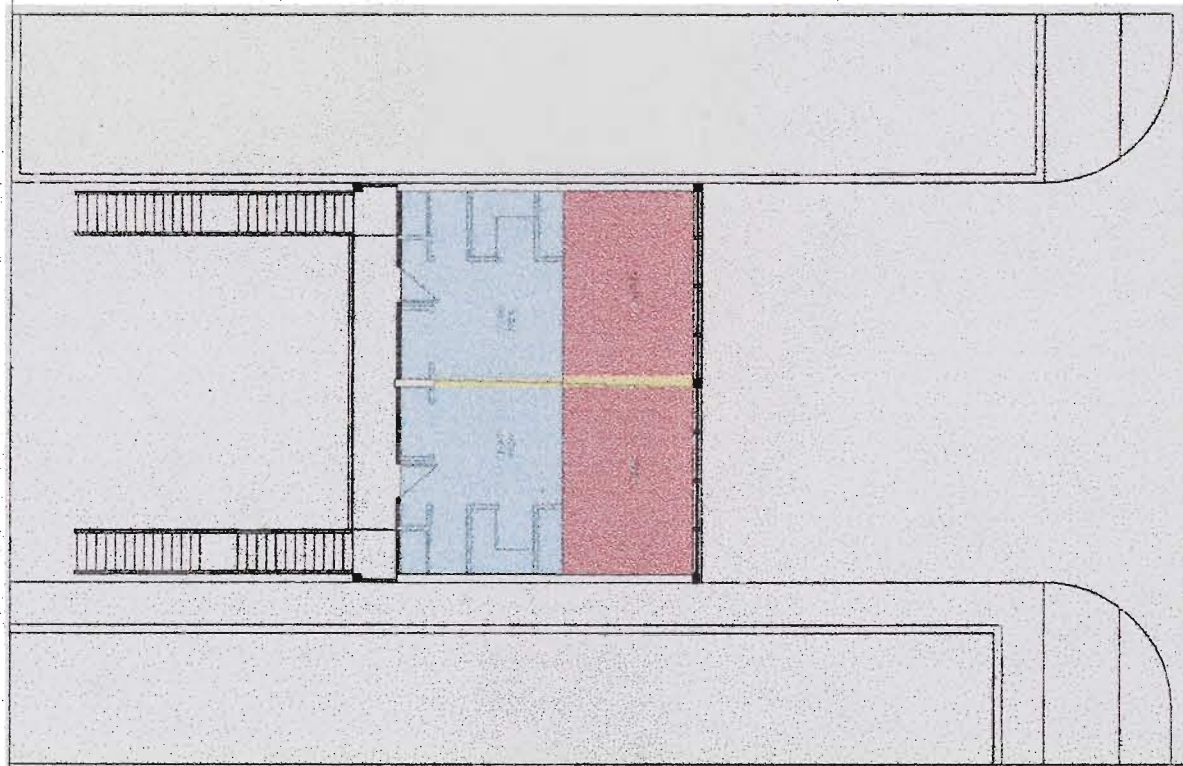


Figure 95. Interior of studio closed.

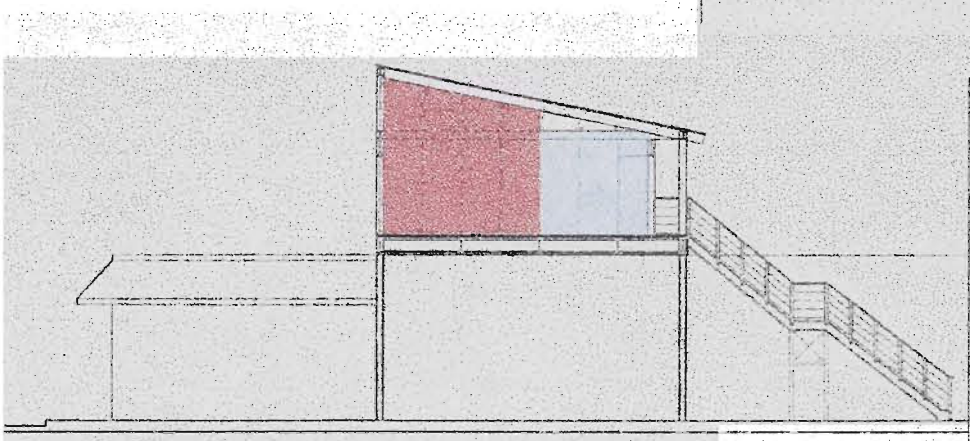


Figure 96. Section

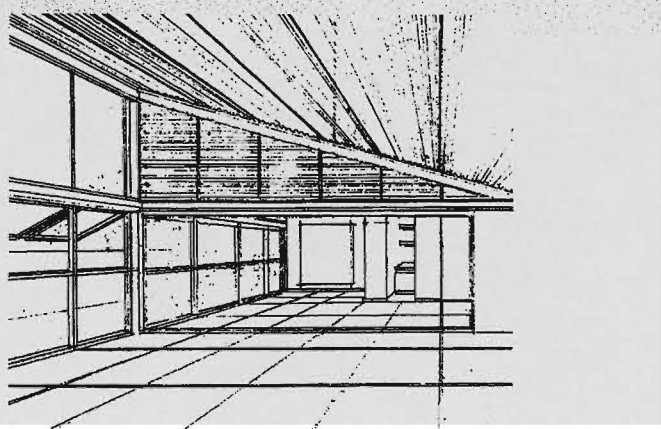


Figure 97. Interior of studio opened



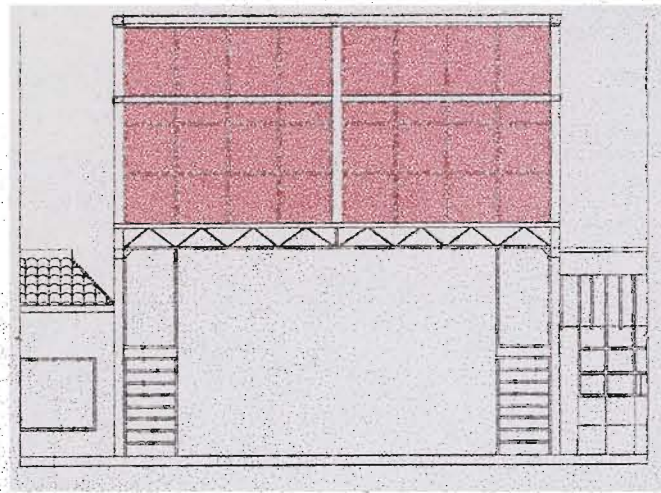


Figure 98. North Elevation.

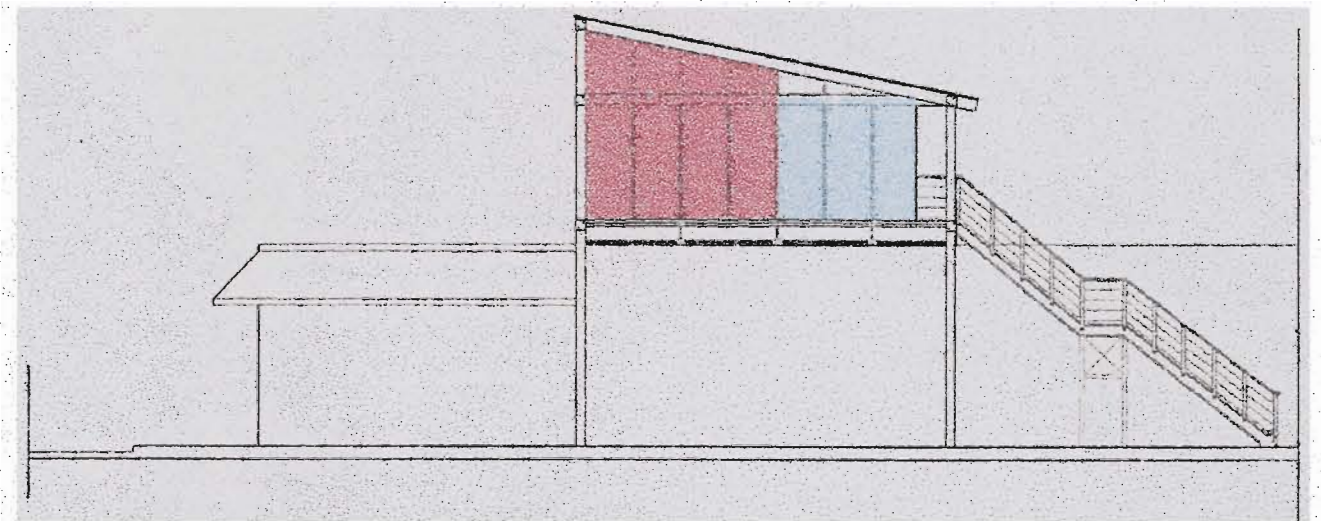


Figure 99. East Elevation.

### SITE 3: 1341 S.W. 8<sup>TH</sup> STREET



Figure 100. Site Photos.

Site 3 is located in the middle of 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the north side of Eighth Street. The structure was built in 1942 at that time it was occupied by the Wendel Filling Station until 1957. In 1957 it became Tony and Dick Auto Service until 1973. Today it still remains an auto repair shop.

The existing concrete block structure measures 50' along Eighth Street by 30 ' deep into the lot. It sits back on the 75'x120' lot creating a large empty space on its south side adjacent to Eighth Street. It's 16' high ceilings were considered advantageous when designing the artist's studios.

The site was selected because it is in need of major repairs. Its location is also ideal; on the east there is a small colony of artists' studios and residences as well as an antique shop. Located to the west of the lot is the Casa de Los Trucos a custom shop operating on Eighth Street since 1970.



SITE3: PROCESS

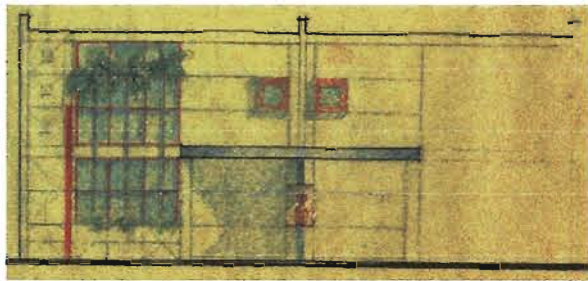
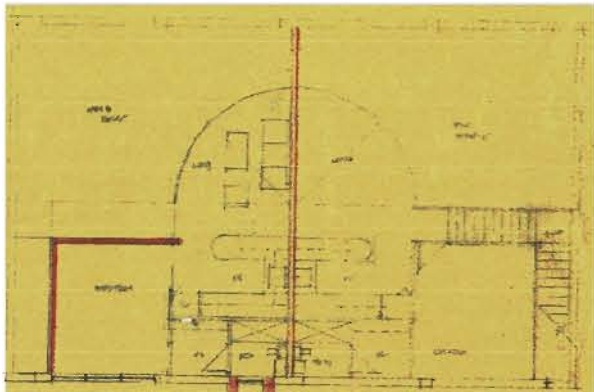
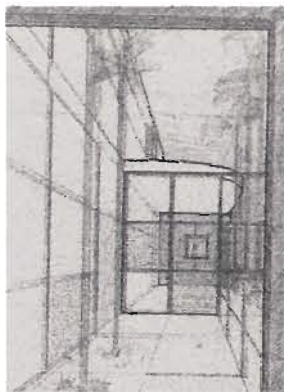
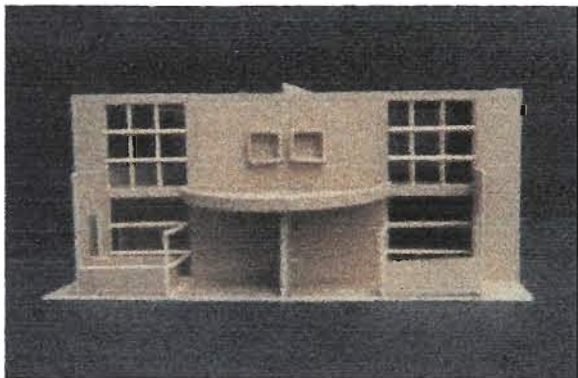
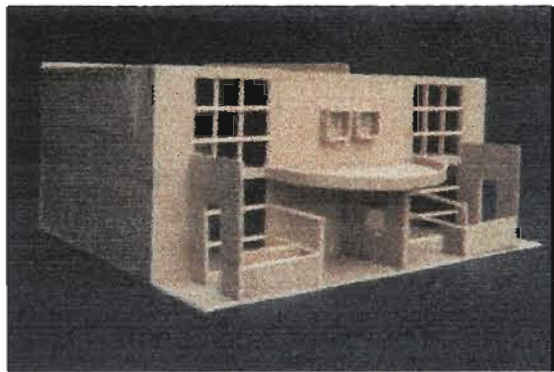


Figure 101 & 102 Preliminary model.

Figure 103. Perspective. Figure 104. Preliminary Plan.

Figure 105. Preliminary Elevation.

The artists' studios designed on this site were to incorporate the Cuban ethnic elements of community, flexibility and production.

The simple rectangular box-like structure offered a challenge. The first preliminary solution, as seen above dealt with a series of articulations in the front entrance with the purpose of breaking the box effect. Two large units occupied the existing building in this solution. The solution was abandoned due to the large scale of the units. Also the articulation was not necessary and the Cuban ethnic elements were not incorporated. The second preliminary solution eliminated much of the articulation and simply punctured square small windows with prefabricated shadow boxes as seen below. It also created a fence where artists could create their work in an exterior environment. This solution was abandoned because the small windows were decorative and the fence created a barrier toward what could be a potential meeting place for the community.

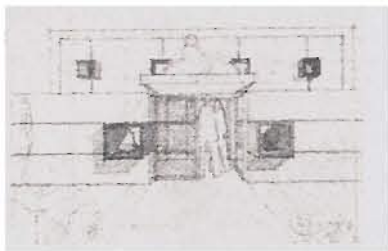


Figure 106. Exterior Perspective.

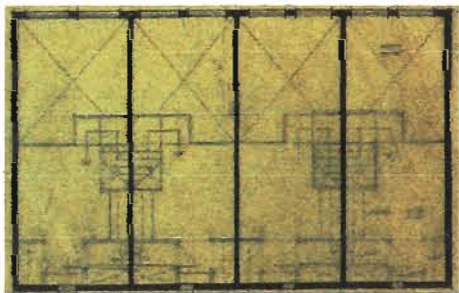


Figure 107. Plans.

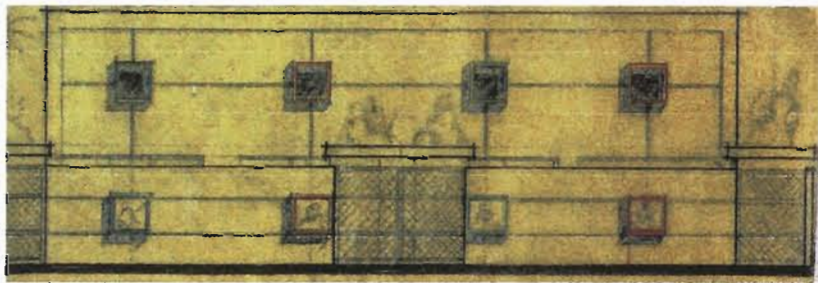


Figure 108. Front Elevation.



Figure 109. Site Plan



## SITE 3: PROPOSED DESIGN SOLUTION

Site 3 incorporated the following ethnic Cuban elements into the design solution:

- Strong relationship to the street/Community
- Production
- Flexibility

Strong Relation to the Street/Community:

The existing building on the site sits to the north. This creates a plaza space in the front of the building. The area can be used to conduct community meetings or artist's exhibits. The plaza is indicated by the green screen on the site plan. This space can become a place where artists can share ideas similar to the function of the cafe windows along *Calle Ocho*.

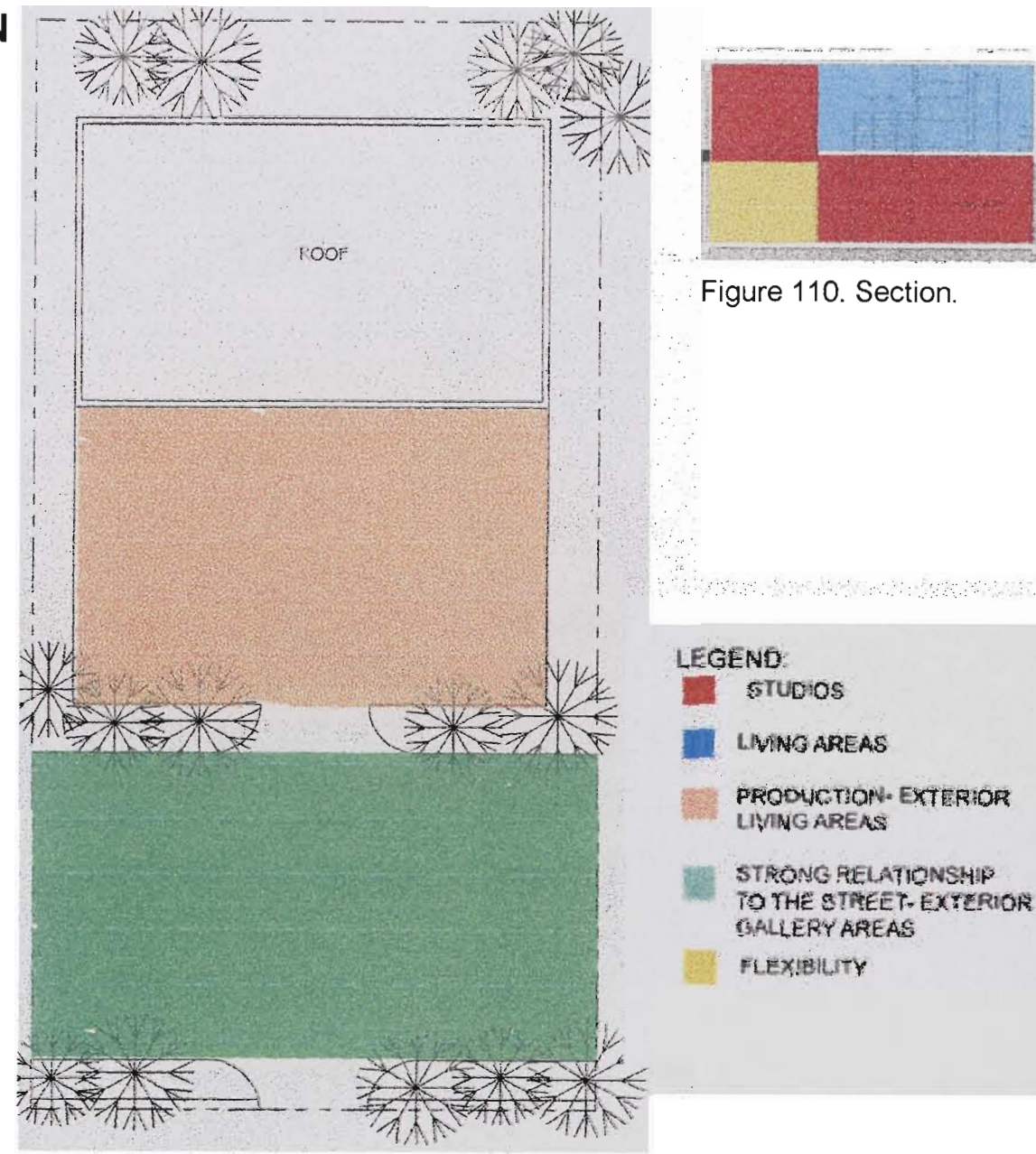


Figure 111. Site Plan.

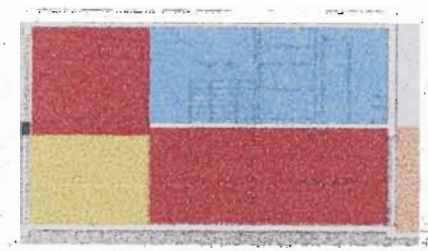


Figure 110. Section.

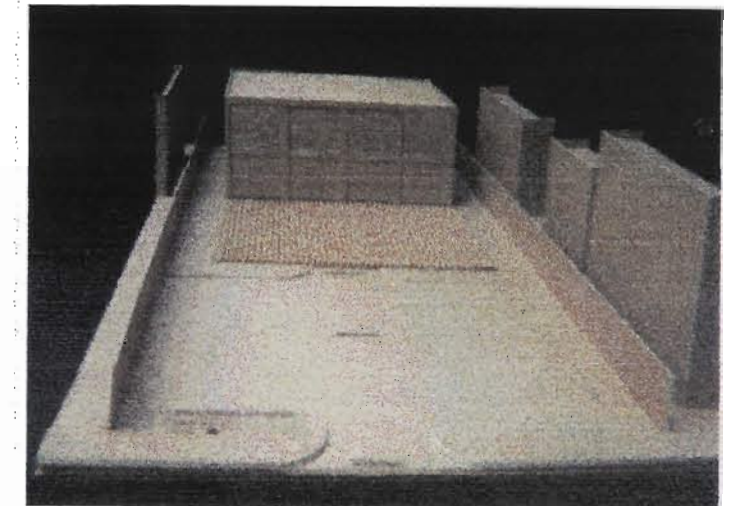
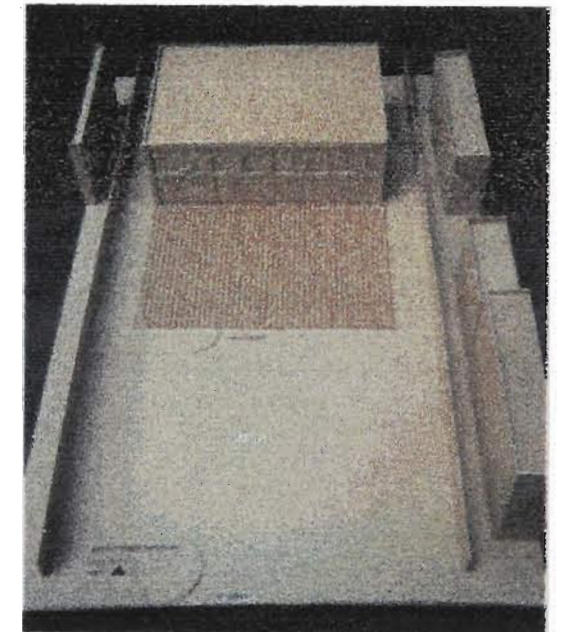


Figure 112 & 113. Plaza and Production Space can be seen in front of the building.



Production:

The exterior studio areas provided in the south side of the existing building. Areas noted by the peach colored screen in the site plan and floor plan create a space where pedestrians can observe the artist at work. This relationship is similar to the pedestrians as they observe the skilled tobacco manufacturers in their craft.

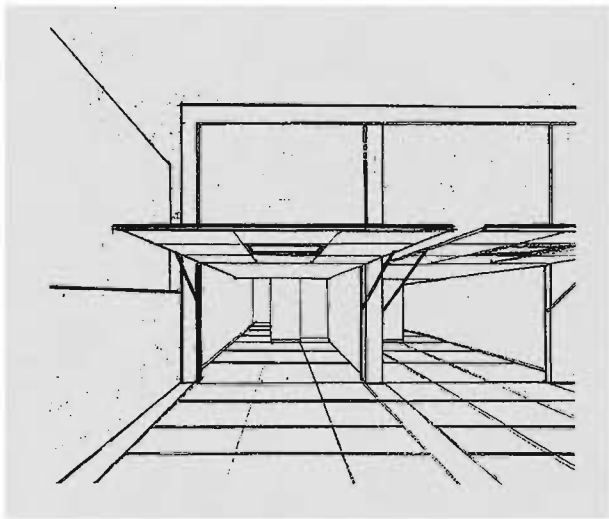


Figure 114. Exterior studio work area.

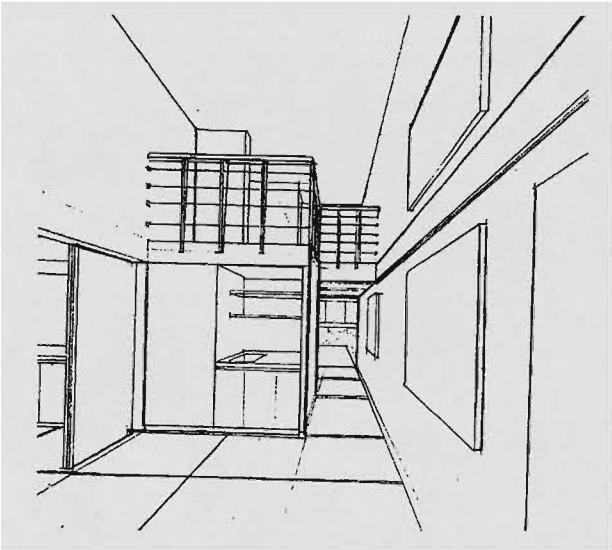


Figure 116. Interior Studio Area.

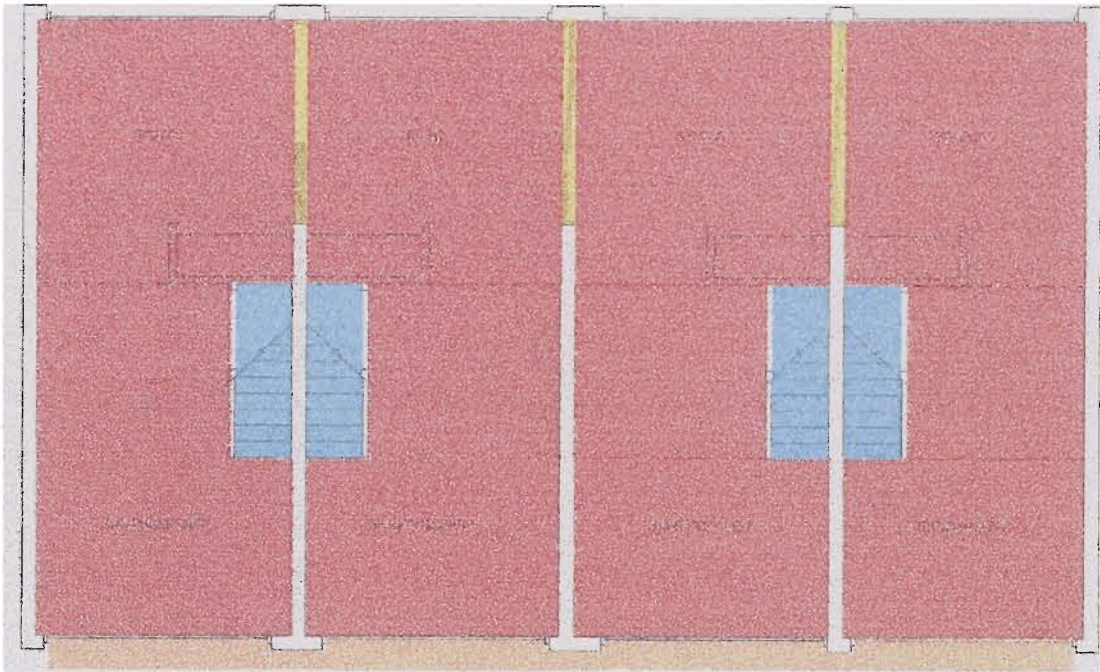


Figure 115. First Floor Plan.



Figure 117. South Elevation.



Flexibility;

The flexibility and adaptability of the Cuban exiles proved to be an asset for their community. Cubans adapted the buildings on Eighth Street to serve their needs. The development of the cafe window is a great example of this ethnic quality.

Artist's studios were designed to offer a similar flexibility. The studios located on the north side of the building can be opened by a system of sliding panels. The studio space could work as individual or a large common space.

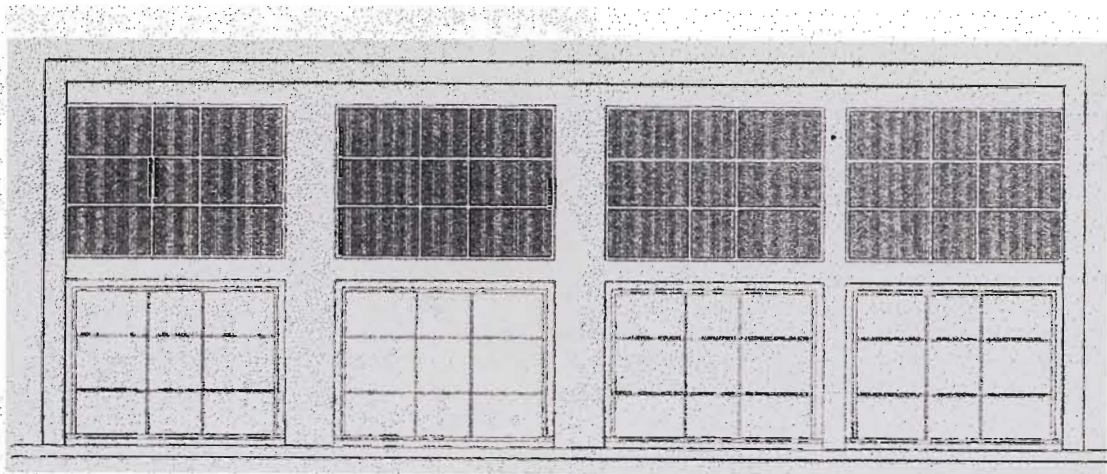
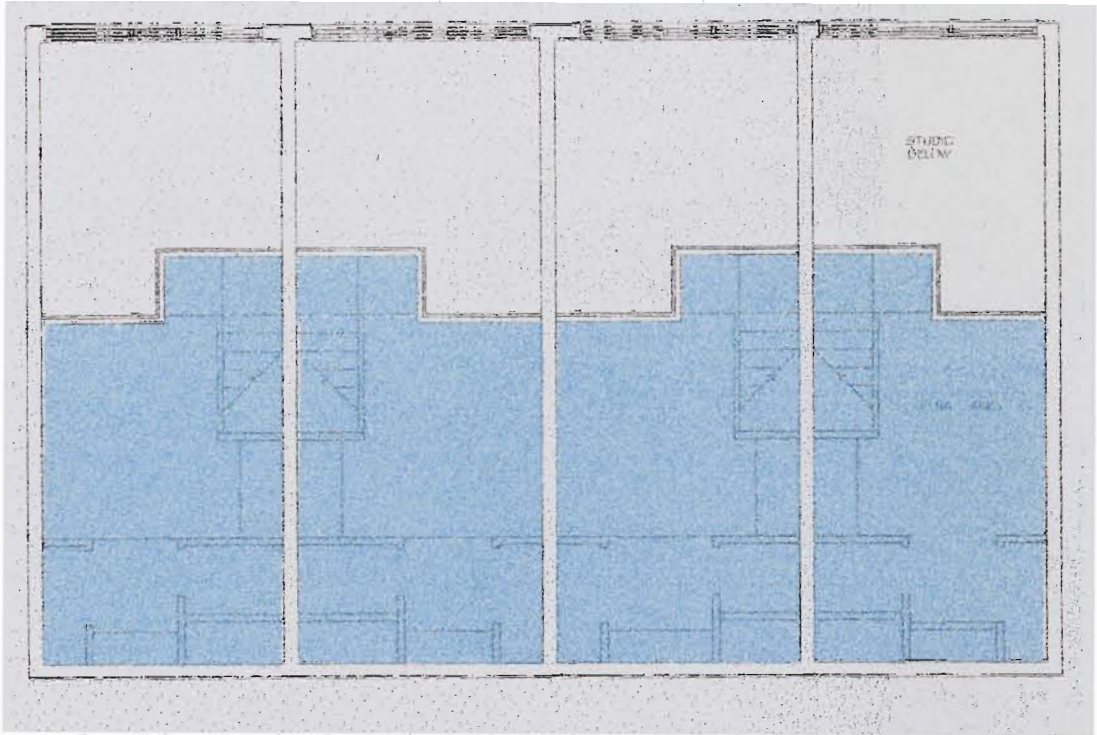
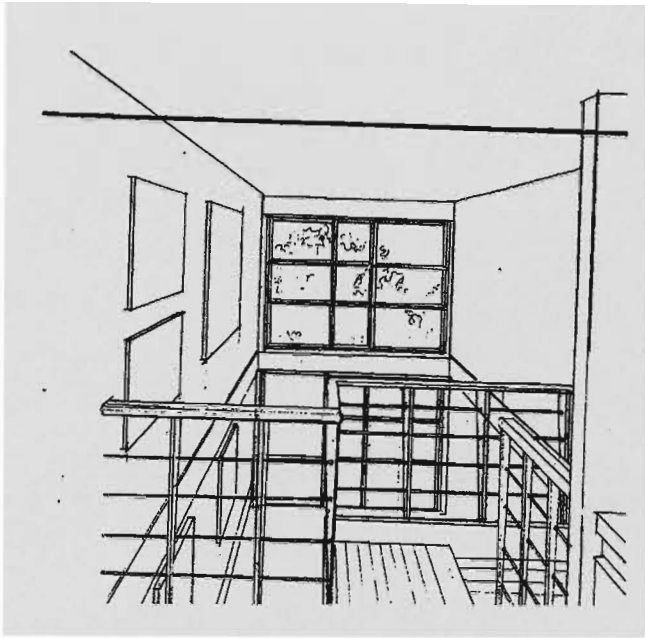


Figure 118 & 119. Perspective of Loft above, Section below.

Figure 120 & 121. Loft Plan above, North Elevation below.

## CONCLUSION:

Eighth Street, a commercial artery started in the early 1920's, had served immigrants in their struggle to succeed in South Florida. The Jewish immigrants of the 1930s, first developed this street into a vital urban commercial row with ethnic identity. Following their success, they found other areas in South Florida to continue their lives.

Eighth Street also assisted the Cubans who arrived in the 1960s and 1970s to achieve economic success beyond their wildest dreams. Numerous Cubans concentrated in the area of Little Havana creating a commercial market for the small businesses located on *Calle Ocho*. Many Cuban exiles were owners of the small businesses along *Calle Ocho*. They were experienced businessmen and professionals who understood the American system and therefore, through their persistence and work ethic, were able to succeed economically. Cubans created yet another ethnic layer for 8<sup>th</sup> Street. In a short span of ten years, 8<sup>th</sup> Street was transformed into *Calle Ocho*.

Today, Central American immigrants struggle to succeed in this commercial artery. The Spanish language and similar culture in *Calle Ocho* make it a familiar environment for the new Central American immigrants. This change is evident by the many ethnic shops now catering to the Central American culture.

Eighth Street is experiencing a moment of potential revitalization with the influx of the artist to the area. The artists find the expensive rents in Miami Beach prohibitive and have migrated to *Calle Ocho*. The street offers the artists affordable rents and a vital urban environment. The artists are bringing other related business such as galleries and antique shops to the street.

Miami's course of history has been affected by this historical commercial street, which has helped and continues to assist many different groups to succeed. Eight Street has been a very important component in the formation of the immigrant city of Miami. It is therefore, essential to insure its longevity as a vital urban organism.

The story of the development of Eighth Street can be considered a small cell in the formation of the United States. A country made up of mostly immigrant groups, the story of Eighth Street has been re-told numerous times in the course of American history. Throughout American history, immigrant groups have traditionally formed ethnic neighborhoods. These ethnic neighborhoods offer a transition into mainstream society.